Men-at-Arms

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The New Zealand Expeditionary Force in World War II

Wayne Stack & Barry O'Sullivan • Illustrated by Mike Chappell

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Series editor Martin Windrow

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Dedications

Wayne Stack dedicates his work to his two uncles who served in combat in World War II and the Korean War:
Private Jack 'Corp' Collins, C Company, 26th Battalion, 2 NZEF (North Africa and Italy)
Lieutenant-Commander William 'Bill' Stack, RNZVNR – Royal New Zealand Navy (Korea)
Barry O'Sullivan dedicates his work to his wife Lisa, and his children, Christopher and Claire

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The authors would also like to make a special acknowledgement to Mike Chappell, whose superb artwork in the colour plates lifts this book to another level. We feel privileged that Mike agreed to work on this project, his last Osprey title before retiring.

Artist's Note

Readers may care to note that the original paintings from which the colour plates in this book were prepared are available for private sale. All reproduction copyright whatsoever is retained by the Publishers. All enquiries should be addressed to:
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The Publishers regret that they can enter into no correspondence upon this matter.

TITLE PAGE A soldier taking a break during 2nd NZ Division's service in the Western Desert of Egypt – an environment in which the Kiwis had to adapt, and clothe themselves, for extremes of heat and cold within the same day. (Barry O'Sullivan Collection)

Private Jack 'Corp' Collins, C Coy, 26th Bn, 2nd NZ Division. Jack enlisted as a 20-year-old in 1942, and fought in Tunisia and Italy. He was wounded, and temporarily captured, during his unit's attack on Cassino railway station in March 1944. He recovered from his wounds – though he has carried a piece of shrapnel near his spine ever since – and ended the war in Trieste in 1945. In 2004 he was one of the few surviving veterans to return to Cassino for the 60th anniversary commemorations. Here he wears the ribbon of the Africa Star with Eighth Army numeral on his battledress blouse; other ranks were authorized to wear the blouse open with a shirt collar and necktie in January 1945. (Jack Collins Collection)

THE NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN WORLD WAR II

INTRODUCTION

The 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force of World War II was small compared to other Allied armies, but it became an integral part of the British Commonwealth forces that came together to defeat the Axis powers. Building on the military reputation so hard-won by the New Zealanders in the Great War, the soldiers of 2 NZEF enhanced that reputation through service in the Mediterranean and Pacific theatres. Although fighting as an independent Dominion, New Zealand maintained a sense of duty to Britain. This was highlighted when the New Zealand prime minister, Michael Joseph Savage, declared at the outbreak of war on 3 September 1939: 'Both with gratitude for the past, and with confidence in the future, we arrange ourselves without fear beside Britain. Where she goes, we go; where she stands, we stand…'.

This unflinching commitment came at a cost. Out of just 355,000 available men of military service age, more than 135,000 New Zealanders served overseas during the war – a figure equating to an extraordinary 12 per cent of the country's total population. At the peak of national mobilization, out of the 157,000 serving in the armed forces, 127,000 had enlisted in the Army, 24,000 in the Royal New Zealand Air Force and 6,000 in the Royal New Zealand Navy. Of the 36,038 who became casualties during the war, 11,671 were either killed in action or died of wounds; another 15,749 were wounded, and 8,618 became prisoners of war. The majority of casualties were sustained by the 2nd NZ Expeditionary Force, with 6,793 deaths, 15,324 wounded and 7,863 captured. The significance of this sacrifice becomes clear when New Zealand's casualty rate of 24 per 1,000 of total population is compared to that of Australia, with 13 casualties per 1,000, and Canada, with 9 per 1,000. (The comparable figure for United Kingdom service and civilian casualties was approximately 15 per 1,000.)

New Zealand had no standing army, and on the outbreak of war the government once again had to rely on volunteers from the 10,000 citizen-soldiers of the Territorial Force in order to establish a division-size expeditionary force. This 2 NZEF, which became the main focus of New Zealand's war effort, was a national army under New Zealand

1940: W.J. Jordan, New Zealand High Commissioner in Britain, posing with officers of the 2nd Echelon at a NZYMCA mobile canteen in London. The officers wear Service Dress with 'lemon-squeezer' hats and 'Sam Browne' belts. (Warren Collingwood Collection)

command. In November 1939 a recently retired British Army officer, MajGen Bernard Freyberg, VC, DSO**, volunteered his services, and was appointed to command the expeditionary 2nd NZ Division. As a direct result of the perceived mismanagement of New Zealand troops by British commanders in World War I, Freyberg was given a special charter that made him directly responsible to the New Zealand government, and gave him the authority to withdraw his troops from operations that threatened what he judged to be unacceptably high casualties.[1] When the 3rd NZ Div was established in 1942 to serve in the Pacific theatre its commander, MajGen Harold Barrowclough, was given a similar charter. This precaution was instrumental in maintaining the confidence of the troops of the two expeditionary divisions in their commanders. Knowing that their lives would not be needlessly squandered, they showed no less eagerness to fight than had their fathers in 1914–18.

The egalitarian nature of New Zealand's settler society was still reflected in the 2nd Expeditionary Force. The 'Kiwis' respected rank, but were notorious for not saluting officers. Drawn from a small and comparatively classless population where 'Jack is as good as his master', New Zealand soldiers with leadership abilities were promoted regardless of social background. The infantry battalions were recruited on a provincial basis, with many officers leading friends and relatives from their home towns. This fostered unit cohesion, and helped to develop the élan for which the New Zealanders were noted. National values of 'mateship' and teamwork helped to forge trainees into effective fighting units, whose successes in battle – and stoicism in defeat – enhanced the already high reputation earned by New Zealanders in the Great War.

In total, 104,988 men and women served in the 2 NZEF between 1939 and 1946, cementing its reputation amongst friends and foes alike as a first-class fighting force whose dogged determination could be relied upon.

1 See MAA 473, *The New Zealand Expeditionary Force in World War I*

COMMANDERS

Lieutenant-General Sir Bernard Freyberg, VC, DSO**

Bernard Freyberg (1889–1963) was an experienced regular British Army officer when he was appointed to command the 2nd NZ Division in November 1939. He had been born in England, but his parents had emigrated to New Zealand when he was aged two; he spent his formative years in the Dominion, where he trained as a dentist. He had served as a junior officer in the Territorial Force before travelling overseas in early 1914, but while living in London he was unsuccessful in applying for a commission in the NZ Expeditionary Force. He was subsequently offered a British commission, and served in the Royal Naval Division at Gallipoli and on the Western Front, where he quickly rose to lieutenant-colonel commanding the Hood Bn, taking command of 189 Bde when its brigadier became a casualty on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. In all Freyberg was wounded nine times, and awarded the Victoria Cross, the DSO and two Bars, as well as being Mentioned in Dispatches twice. He ended the war as a temporary brigadier in command of 29th Division. During the inter-war years he received various staff appointments in England, reaching the rank of major-general in 1934, before retiring in 1937 when he was judged medically unfit due to a heart condition.

In 1939 Freyberg offered his services to the New Zealand government; his appointment to command the 2nd NZ Div proved an inspired choice, and the New Zealand troops considered Freyberg as one of their own. Always wary of sustaining unnecessary casualties, Freyberg did not hesitate to invoke his special charter when it seemed justified. At Cassino, after his division had suffered 1,000 casualties, he advised his superiors that he was withdrawing it from the line. The threat of invoking the charter against operations that he considered were against New Zealand interests made him unpopular with some superiors, especially with Gen Claude Auchinleck during the 1941–42 North African campaigns. However, he had a good relationship with Gen Bernard Montgomery, who thought highly of him. 'Monty' employed Freyberg's division in a series of successful 'left hook' flanking manoeuvres against successive enemy defensive lines while driving the Axis forces westwards after the second battle of El Alamein in October–November 1942.

The remarkable row of gallantry ribbons on Freyberg's chest was testimony to his personal courage. Churchill described him as a 'salamander', due to his love of fire and eagerness for action – a style of command that saw him receive no fewer than ten more wounds during World War II. He had an excellent reputation as a divisional-level tactician and excelled in planning set-piece attacks, such as the New Zealanders' part in Operation *Supercharge* at El Alamein, *Supercharge II* at Tebaga Gap, and the storming of the Senio river line in Italy in 1945. He had less success as a temporary corps commander during the defence of Crete in May 1941 and at Cassino in early 1944 – though under the circumstances he faced in Crete, it is unlikely that any commander could have done better. His decision to bomb the Benedictine monastery on Monte Cassino was controversial, but can be argued as justified at the time.

Major-General Freyberg in casual dress, watching a game of rugby – a sport which he encouraged. Displaying great qualities of leadership, he was always concerned for the welfare of his troops both in and out of the line, and was famous for securing the best possible facilities for his men and his staff during advances in North Africa and Italy. This, together with his common-sense attitude to discipline, appealed to the egalitarian nature of the New Zealanders and endeared him to his troops, who – since he was a tall, burly man – referred to him affectionately as 'Tiny'. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ; 1/4-017933-F)

Although not a military genius, Freyberg was a solid and reliable commander, whose methodical, pragmatic and informal approach provided the style of leadership that inspired his division to overcome repeated defeats and disappointments and achieve success. For this reason his appointment by the Crown as Governor-General of New Zealand in 1946 proved very popular.

Major-General Sir Harold Barrowclough

Harold Barrowclough (1894–1972), born in Masterton, served in the Great War, and was awarded the Military Cross on the Somme. During the inter-war years he rose through the ranks of the Territorial Force, in parallel with his profession as a solicitor. He rejoined the Army in 1939 and was appointed to command 6th Brigade of 2nd NZ Div, earning a reputation as a determined and aggressive officer in Greece, Crete and North Africa.

Returning to New Zealand in 1942, he was promoted major-general and given command of the newly formed 3rd NZ Division. The United States theatre commander in the South Pacific had intended that the under-strength, under-resourced and inexperienced division should be used as garrison troops. However, Barrowclough was determined to make his force combat-ready, and pursued rigorous training that included exercises in jungle warfare and amphibious landings. He worked hard to establish good relations with senior American commanders, and closely studied their methods to ensure that his division could co-operate effectively with US forces.

General Barrowclough demonstrated his effectiveness as a planner when he oversaw 3rd NZ Div's three combat operations. He secured the islands of Vella Lavella in the Solomons, and Mono and Stirling in the Treasury group, during September and October 1943, and his greatest achievement was as overall commander of the combined US/NZ land task force directed to assault the Green Islands in February 1944. Of more than 16,000 personnel under his command, two-thirds were American; Adm Halsey, who held the South Pacific command at that time, attributed the success of the operation to the thorough planning and co-operation of Gen Barrowclough and the US naval commander.

Barrowclough's tactical sense, decisiveness and professional competence enabled him to forge his division – which initially seemed unpromising – into an effective fighting force, capable of successfully conducting complex and demanding amphibious operations in unforgiving terrain.

ORGANIZATION

2nd New Zealand Division

When New Zealand declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939 its military forces were ill-prepared and under-resourced. Only some 100 regular officers and 478 other ranks of the Permanent Force were

available for service. Anti-war feeling, and government fiscal restraint during the 1920s and 1930s, had seen the Territorial Force run down to only 9,210 all ranks by 1935. Compulsory military service had been abolished, with many Territorial units reduced to small cadres, and training for the regular Staff Corps and the Territorial Force had been severely restricted. In 1938 the government almost doubled its annual defence expenditure to improve training and refit the army, but the soldiers of the 2 NZEF still embarked for overseas in early 1940 dressed in uniforms and equipment dating from World War I.

There was an immediate positive response to the government's request for volunteers for an expeditionary force. The mobilization of 6,600 volunteers between the ages of 21 and 35 for active service overseas was authorized on 6 September 1939. By early October enlistments had reached 14,983, encouraging the government to offer Britain a complete infantry division, consisting of three Echelons each of 6,600, to serve in the Middle East.

The units of the 1st Echelon lacked experienced and trained officers, but the volunteers were enthusiastic and committed. After only three months' training in New Zealand the 1st Echelon embarked for Egypt on 5 January 1940, with the 18th, 19th and 20th Infantry Battalions, and supporting units of machine-gunners, artillery, engineers, signallers and medics. The 2nd Echelon – consisting of the 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 28th (Maori) Bns, along with supporting units – embarked on 2 May 1940, but was diverted to the United Kingdom at that time of threatened German invasion. Thereafter volunteer enlistments slackened, but by the time conscription was introduced in July 1940 some 59,000 New Zealanders had volunteered, ensuring that the 3rd Echelon joined the 1st in Egypt in September 1940 at full strength.

Soldiers of the Bren-carrier platoon, HQ Coy, of the all-volunteer 28th (Maori) Bn in Egypt, 1941. All wear the unpopular Indian-made pith helmet; the patch on the side was a disc with one quarter removed, indicating that at this stage the 28th was a non-divisional unit – it had not yet joined 5th Brigade. The man standing in the carrier wears the Indian-made khaki overalls issued to troops handling mechanical equipment. This battalion was the only one that returned home as a complete unit and was disbanded in New Zealand. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; DA-01385-F)

2nd New Zealand Division

4th NZ Brigade (from Oct 1942, 4th Armoured Brigade)
18th Infantry Battalion (from 1943, 18th Armd Regt)
19th Inf Bn (from 1943, 19th Armd Regt)
20th Inf Bn (from 1943, 20th Armd Regt)
22nd Bn (Motorized – joined 1943)

5th NZ Brigade
21st Inf Bn
22nd Inf Bn (see 4th NZ Bde)
23rd Inf Bn
28th (Maori) Inf Bn

6th NZ Brigade
24th Inf Bn
25th Inf bn
26th Inf Bn

9th NZ Brigade (formed Feb 1945)
22nd Inf Bn
Divisional Cavalry Bn (as infantry)
27th (MG) Bn (as infantry)

HQ 2nd NZ Division Field Artillery
4th NZ Field Regt
5th NZ Field Regt
6th NZ Field Regt
7th NZ Anti-Tank Regt
14th NZ Light Anti-Aircraft Regt

Divisional Cavalry Regt (until Feb 1945)
27th (MG) Bn (until Feb 1945)

Notes:
Attached to each infantry brigade were: one NZFA field regt (25-pdr gun-howitzers); one battery each from 7th AT Regt (2-pdr, later 6-pdr, finally 17-pdr AT guns) & 14th LAA Regt (40mm Bofors); until Feb 1945, one company from 27th (MG) Bn (Vickers MMGs); an NZMC Field Ambulance, and companies or other elements of NZ Signals, Engineers, Ordnance, Army Service Corps, etc.
Brigades and units were often termed e.g. 'Four Brigade', 'Twenty-Five Battalion', etc.

Early in the war the Divisional Cavalry was issued with British Mk II and Mk III Vickers Light Tanks; these obsolete models were used in the desert for training, but were not taken to Greece. For that campaign the regiment received South African Marmon-Herrington Mk II armoured cars, as well as Bren and Universal carriers. On returning to North Africa they were re-equipped with the Mk IV Light Tank, and later with the US-made Stuart V. The trooper wears khaki drill overalls and the black RAC beret. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; DA-02410-F)

Brigades

On completion the 2nd NZ Div was 18,000 strong, with three infantry brigades plus artillery and other support and service elements (see page 7). Each brigade generally kept its original battalions and supporting units for the duration of the war.

The regiment of NZ Field Artillery attached to each brigade followed current Royal Artillery organization. Each consisted of three batteries, together with a regimental HQ, a Light Aid Detachment of Engineers, and a Signals section. Before the 1941 Greek campaign each battery had 12x 25-pdrs, divided into three troops of four guns each, the troop being divided into two sections of two guns. After the regiments lost their guns in Greece and Crete the artillery was reformed in Egypt; in keeping with changes made in the Royal Artillery, each battery was reduced from three to two gun troops. Although each field regiment was attached to a brigade, overall command of these units was exercised by an artillery brigadier termed the CRA (Commander Royal Artillery).

Battalions

Unlike the New Zealand Expeditionary Force of the Great War, whose battalions were named after their provinces of recruitment, those of 2 NZEF – while still recruited from specific provinces – were numbered in a single sequence. In the 2nd NZ Div, the 18th, 21st and 24th Bns were from Auckland and northern districts of North Island; 19th, 22nd and 25th Bns were drawn from Wellington, the east coast and lower North Island districts; and 20th, 23rd and 26th Bns were from the less populated South Island. The original three brigades included one battalion from each of the recruiting provinces.

Maori were not subject to conscription, and only volunteers served in the 28th (Maori) Battalion. Its companies were recruited from specific tribal areas, dominated by the largest tribes: A Company from Nga Puhi and Aupouri in Northland, B Coy from Te Arawa in the Bay of Plenty, C Coy from Ngati Porou on the east coast of North Island, and D Coy from Ngati Toa and Ngati Kahungunu in the lower North Island and also Ngai Tahu from South Island.

The Stuart (US M3 light tank) had a four-man crew and a 37mm main gun. This crew wear KD clothing and black berets with motor-transport goggles. Later, in Italy, the Divisional Cavalry would mainly operate Staghound Mk I and Mk II heavy armoured cars. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; DA-02569-F)

The infantry battalions followed British structure, with four rifle companies and a battalion headquarters company. Rifle companies were designated A to D; each consisted of three platoons of approximately 54 men, the platoons having four sections of 10–12 men commanded by an NCO. The battalion HQ company was by far the biggest in the battalion, consisting of Signals,

Anti-Aircraft, Mortar, Bren-gun Carrier, Pioneer and Transport platoons, along with quartermaster staff and cooks. The battalion headquarters comprised a lieutenant-colonel in command, his second-in-command (usually a major) along with an adjutant and his staff, as well as Intelligence and Provost sections. At full strength battalions could exceed 800 all ranks; however, on active service this number was seldom maintained, due to casualties and the intermittent arrival of reinforcements from New Zealand.

Until February 1945 the three brigades were each supported by an attached company from 27th (MG) Bn; this unit was recruited from throughout the country, consisting of specialist Territorial machine-gunners.

The 7th Anti-Tank Regt, whose batteries were distributed between the three brigades, was initially equipped with 'portee' 2-pdr AT guns mounted on 15cwt trucks; they could be fired from the vehicle, or dismounted to fire from the ground – slower, but presenting a much less visible target. Ineffective against German armour, the 2-pdrs were later replaced with 6-pdrs and, ultimately, 17-pdr guns. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; DA-02279-F)

The division's independent Divisional Cavalry Regt provided a reconnaissance force for the whole formation. This also recruited country-wide, with volunteers from the Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury and Otago Territorial Mounted Rifle regiments. In Egypt it was originally equipped with Bren carriers and out-dated and under-armed Vickers Light Tanks, but later received the Stuart V (US M3 light tank).

* * *

During the war some changes took place within 2nd NZ Division. On Crete a short-lived *ad hoc* 10th Bde was put together from the Divisional Cavalry (which had been forced to abandon its vehicles in Greece), a composite battalion of troops from support and service units, and two battalions of Greek infantry. This brigade was disbanded prior to the evacuation from Crete on 31 May 1941.

As early as June 1941, Gen Freyberg had identified the need for the division to have its own armoured units to support the infantry. This eventually resulted in 4th NZ Bde being converted into 4th NZ Armoured Bde on 5 October 1942, its battalions being redesignated, in cavalry style, as armoured regiments. The brigade was withdrawn from the division prior to the second battle of El Alamein, and remained training in Egypt until October 1943.

The units of 4th Armd Bde were organized along the lines of British armoured regiments, though with fewer tanks. The New Zealand regiments had an establishment of 52 Shermans (US M4 medium tanks), divided into three squadrons each of 16, and a four-tank regimental HQ Troop. Each squadron consisted of a four-tank HQ, and four troops each with three tanks. The regiment also had a Reconnaissance Troop with Stuart V light tanks, and a Communication Troop with Lynx scout cars. From October 1943 until November 1944 the 22nd NZ Inf Bn also became part of the brigade, being designated as its lorried 'motor battalion'.

The creation of this integral armoured brigade in October 1942 left the division with only two infantry brigades. To meet the need for more infantry in Italy, the 9th Bde was established in February 1945. This consisted of 22nd (Mot) Bn transferred from 4th Armd Bde, along with

A Sherman tank of 4th NZ Armd Bde in Italy, 1944, immobilized by a thrown left track. The Italian campaign forced changes in the operational deployments of the division's armour from those for which the regiments had practiced in North Africa. The terrain and combat conditions in the peninsula – cut by numerous river obstacles on either flank of its mountainous spine, and stubbornly defended from prepared defensive lines and urban strongpoints – placed a premium on infantry with artillery support, and offered few possibilities for the armoured brigade to manoeuvre as an independent element. This led to individual squadrons being dispersed in the infantry-support role, which later allowed the redeployment of 22nd Inf Bn to the new 9th Inf Brigade. Tanks were also often used as makeshift artillery. (Tim Clyne Collection)

27th (MG) Bn and the Divisional Cavalry, which were transformed into rifle battalions. This strong divisional structure, unique in the British armies, remained in force until the end of the war.

3rd New Zealand Division

The foundation for the short-lived 3rd NZ Div was the small force sent to garrison the island groups of Fiji and Tonga in November 1940. Designated as 8th Bde, this was hastily raised from poorly trained personnel, largely led by inexperienced or unfit officers. The brigade initially consisted of 29th and 30th Bns, together with 35th Field By NZFA and a small number of Engineer, Signals and ASC personnel. Under the command of Brig William Cunningham – who was also responsible for training the small Fijian Defence Force – the New Zealanders had insufficient and outdated artillery, and suffered from shortages of basic equipment. In November 1941, New Zealand accepted responsibility for the defence of British possessions in the South Pacific; at that time there were only 4,943 troops garrisoning Fiji, of whom 945 were Fijians.

Shortly after New Zealand declared war on Japan on 8 December 1941 the Fijian garrison was reinforced with 35th, 36th and 37th Bns in January 1942, and reorganized into two brigades. The 8th Bde consisted of 34th and 36th Bns, 35th Field Bty NZFA, 7th Field Ambulance NZMC, 20th Field Coy NZ Engineers, and an NZASC company. The 14th Bde included 30th, 35th and 36th Bns, 37th Field Bty NZFA, 27th AA Bty, and 23rd Field Coy NZ Engineers. The 29th Bn was held as a garrison reserve. By June 1942 there were 10,000 New Zealand Army personnel serving in Fiji. They played a significant role in training Fijian commando units, building defensive positions on several islands, and constructing three sizeable airfields that had been requested by the US government.

When the Americans took over responsibility for the defence of Fiji on 18 July 1942 the New Zealand force returned home to be re-formed as 3rd NZ Division. However, a number of officers and NCOs remained to serve with the Fiji Military Forces. A group of New Zealanders formed the Fiji section of 2 NZEF (IP) – the suffix standing for 'in the Pacific'; this consisted of HQ, postal service, and Ordnance Corps personnel. In Tonga, New Zealand resumed responsibility for the Tongan Defence Force from October 1942; personnel created a full range of TDF units, and Tonga supplied two battalions that served within the New Zealand organization.

The 3rd NZ Div was officially established on 12 August 1942, under the command of MajGen Harold Barrowclough. The division was placed under the operational control of the US C-in-C South Pacific, who originally intended that the New Zealanders should act as a relief for the US 1st Marine Div in the southern Solomon Islands, simply to hold and garrison captured areas.

In the tropical conditions of the South Pacific islands, this crew of a 40mm Bofors gun of 3rd NZ Div's 29th Light Anti-Aircraft Regt are casually dressed; their shorts have been cut down from US-made 'chino' trousers. Note that some of their helmets are covered with 'bottle-green' hessian. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; PAColl-1913-01)

This muddy 3rd NZ Div camp is dwarfed by the coconut palms. (Barry O'Sullivan Collection)

At the time New Zealand had insufficient manpower for two full divisions. The government was committed to maintaining the combat capability of 2nd NZ Div in the Mediterranean, leaving the new formation under-strength, and even at its peak the 3rd NZ Div counted 13,500 all ranks. It was divided into two infantry brigades (8th and 14th) of three battalions each, supported by numerous batteries of artillery and companies of signallers, engineers, service corps and medics. A cadre for a third brigade

3rd New Zealand Division

8th NZ Brigade	*14th NZ Brigade*
29th Infantry Battalion	30th Inf Bn
34th Inf Bn	35th Inf Bn
36th Inf Bn	37th Inf Bn
38th Field Regt NZFA	17th Field Regt NZFA
29th LAA Regt (part)	29th LAA Regt (part)
54th AT Regt	144th Independent Battery
23rd Field Coy, NZ Engineers	53rd AT Bty
	3rd NZ Div Tank
	20th & 26th Field Coys NZ Engineers

Note: Plus service elements of NZ Signals, NZASC, NZMC, etc, attached to each brigade.

20th Battalion, 2 NZEF marching through Christchurch in January 1940 before embarking for Egypt; in the foreground, Maj A.P. MacDuff leads A Company. The uniforms and equipment are the same as their fathers had worn during the Great War. (Regimental History Centre, Burnham Military Camp)

(15th) had been established, but was later disbanded. The division was particularly heavy in artillery, and several of these units were subsequently disbanded and their personnel transferred to the infantry. A squadron of Valentine tanks was attached to the division once it was decided that it was to be committed to combat operations.

The 3rd never operated together as a complete division; individual brigade combat groups were judged the most effective for the small-scale offensive operations for which it was employed. The 3rd NZ Div was officially disbanded on 19 October 1944, and 4,000 of its personnel were sent to reinforce the 2nd NZ Div in Italy.

CAMPAIGNS

2nd NZ DIVISION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Egypt & Britain, January 1940–March 1941

On 5 January 1940 the 1st Echelon of the 2 NZEF, with 354 officers and 6,175 other ranks, sailed from New Zealand for Egypt, arriving on 12 February. The 2nd Echelon, of 428 officers and 6,175 men, embarked for Egypt on 2 May 1940, but was diverted to the United Kingdom while in transit, to assist in the defence of Britain after the fall of France. The 3rd Echelon, with approximately 6,500 all ranks, left New Zealand on 27 September and arrived in Egypt six weeks later.

It took 18 months of constant training, from its formation in September 1939 until it first saw combat in Greece in April 1941, for the 2nd NZ Div to be prepared for battle. General Freyberg refused to expose his troops to any offensive operations until he was satisfied that the whole division was combat-ready; he was determined that all would serve together as a complete division, rather than being creamed off progressively in brigade groups subordinated to British higher formations.

While the majority of units of the 1st and 3rd Echelons remained in training at Maadi Camp outside Cairo throughout 1940, Freyberg agreed that some volunteers from the Divisional Cavalry and 27th (MG) Bn, along with signallers and engineers, could get some operational experience by temporary secondment to the British Army's new Long Range Patrol (formed in June 1940, this became the Long Range Desert Group that December). It was originally intended that these personnel were to be dettached on three- to six-month rotations, but in fact some remained with the LRDG until 1943.[2]

The 2nd Echelon arrived in Britain in June 1940 and remained there, under VII Corps, until January 1941. This brigade group, which included 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 28th (Maori) Bns, was stationed in Kent; the troops

2 See Osprey New Vanguard 32, *The Long Range Desert Group 1940–45*

Map from David Filer's *Kiwis in Khaki* – see Bibliography)

underwent rigorous training, including exercises in night attacks, in which the New Zealanders later became experts. With the threat of invasion passing by winter 1940, the 2nd Echelon sailed for Egypt in January 1941 and arrived in March. Only three days after their arrival the whole 2nd NZ Div shipped out for Greece. The reinforcement of this threatened ally was judged by London to be strategically necessary; but it achieved tragically little, while stripping Gen Sir Archibald Wavell's recently victorious force in Libya of vital assets on the eve of the arrival of the first elements of Gen Rommel's Deutsches Afrikakorps to stiffen the Italians.

Greece, March–April 1941

In March 1941 the division arrived in Greece as part of 'W Force', comprising British, Australian and New Zealand troops under the overall command of LtGen Sir Henry Maitland Wilson. The 2nd NZ Div, along with 6th Australian Div, was placed under operational command of the Australian LtGen Thomas Blamey, and from 12 April this became known as the Anzac Corps.[3]

The New Zealanders were originally deployed along the Aliakmon defensive line in north-eastern Greece. When the Germans invaded from Yugoslavia and Bulgaria on 6 April 1941 this line was immediately outflanked and compromised, and W Force withdrew southwards to avoid being cut off. The division withdrew to a new line, with 4th Bde defending the Servia Pass, 5th Bde positioned along the Katerini front, and 6th Bde in close support. However, German armoured and air superiority, and the collapse of units on the Allies' flanks, forced continual withdrawals. The New Zealand troops put up a spirited defence at the Servia and Olympus Passes, but once they had been outflanked again they were forced to retreat, over difficult terrain and under repeated air attacks. At one stage both 23rd and 28th (Maori) Bns were surrounded and had to fight their way out. At Pinios Pass, 21st Bn and two Australian battalions mounted a vigorous rearguard action that held up the German advance for almost two days.

By 20 April the 2nd NZ Div were dug in on the coastal strip at the legendary Thermopylae Pass. At this time the decision had been made to evacuate Allied forces from Greece, but the Kiwis were determined to hold the pass as long as they could. A German armoured attack was halted through the exceptional gunnery of the division's artillery, with the destruction of 26 enemy tanks. The New Zealanders then carried out a series of rapid fighting withdrawals to designated points of

3 See Elite 153, *The Australian Army in World War II*

evacuation near Athens and in the Peloponnese. A small force of mainly New Zealand troops and a British AA battery, designated as Isthmus Force, was tasked with the defence and destruction of the strategic bridge over the Corinth Canal. On 26 April the bridge was attacked by German airborne troops and overrun, but not before the span had been destroyed. Two days later Gen Freyberg and 6th Bde were successfully evacuated, but many other New Zealanders were eventually forced to surrender at the port of Kalamata.

During this baptism of fire the inexperienced citizen-soldiers had been placed in the path of a professional, well-equipped and well-supported enemy, who inflicted losses of 261 New Zealanders killed in action, 387 wounded and 1,856 captured.

Bren gun crew on Crete, May 1941; their gun is set up on the anti-aircraft tripod mount, and a case of 12 magazines lies ready. The men's appearance betrays the hardships of the Greek campaign. The 2 NZEF used Mk I Brens made in the UK, Australia and Canada, and Mk II and III guns produced by Inglis in Canada. (Haines album, Warren Collingwood Collection)

Crete, April–May 1941

Worse was soon to come. Most of the division was shipped not to Egypt, but to the island of Crete. Their ability to defend it – without adequate air support or sufficient heavy weapons – was questionable, and the decision to attempt it was a political one. This unenviable task fell to Gen Freyberg, as the senior officer on the island.

At his disposal he had what remained of 4th and 5th Bdes (approximately 7,700 men), since 6th Bde and the divisional HQ had been evacuated directly to Egypt. Also under command were the three-battalion 19th Australian Inf Bde, between 5,000 and 6,000 British troops of various infantry and support units, and several battalions of ill-equipped Greek infantry. This composite command was known as 'Creforce'. Most of those evacuated from Greece had abandoned their heavy weapons and transport, retaining their small arms but little else, and were short of almost every necessity. The few available RAF aircraft were evacuated, but nevertheless Freyberg was forbidden to destroy the airfields; he was badly handicapped by the need to avoid taking any steps that might betray London's access to 'Ultra' intelligence of German intentions.

Temporary command of 2nd NZ Div passed to Brig Edward Puttick; Brig James Hargest remained in command of 5th Bde, while Brig Lindsay Inglis replaced Puttick in command of 4th Brigade. A composite 10th Bde of infantry was cobbled together by LtCol Howard Kippenberger, using the Divisional Cavalry, a makeshift composite battalion of non-infantry personnel, and two Greek battalions.

Facing the threat of a combined seaborne and airborne invasion, Freyberg had to disperse his strength to protect the three airfields on the island, as well as the beaches in their vicinity and the base area around Canea. The depleted NZ division was positioned to defend the western area between Maleme and Canea. The New Zealanders were specifically tasked with holding Maleme airfield, and the northern coastline between it and Suda Bay (see map). As overall

commander, Gen Freyberg would openly accept responsibility for the failed defence of the island, but some poor decisions and poor communications by his senior subordinates helped to doom his already dubious chances of success.

When the Germans invaded on 20 May 1941 their initial objectives were the three airfields, whose capture was crucial to ensure the rapid reinforcement of the initial paratroop and glider-borne elements by air-landed units and heavy weapons. The defence of Maleme had been entrusted to the NZ 22nd Bn commanded by LtCol Leslie Andrew, VC. Andrew had placed his four rifle companies at strategic points around the airfield, but he had too few men to hold a wide perimeter including Maleme village and the vital Hill 107 overlooking the airfield.

Although the first wave of German paratroopers suffered heavy casualties, they gathered sufficient numbers to threaten this over-extended perimeter; Andrew had been forced to spread his companies so thinly that they could not provide mutual support, and he had no reserve. As the day progressed he lost contact with several of his companies, and was forced to use runners for communication. He ordered C Coy to mount a local counter-attack accompanied by two tanks, but this faltered when the tanks broke down. By this time the Germans had overrun the RAF camp at the airfield. Believing that his companies there had been destroyed, and struggling to hold Hill 107, Andrew signalled 5th Bde HQ at Platanias that without reinforcement he would be forced to withdraw his battalion – to which Brig Hargest fatefully replied, 'If you must, you must.'

Although he initially refused to reinforce Andrew, Hargest later sent two companies to his aid, but when he finally authorized a counter-attack it came too late and was unco-ordinated. Having lost contact with his companies and Brigade HQ, with no sign of the promised reinforcements, and mistakenly believing that his position was being overrun, Andrew withdrew from Hill 107 during the night. Unknown to him, two companies from 23rd and 28th (Maori) Bns sent by Hargest had advanced to within several hundred yards of the airfield, but then withdrew in the belief that the enemy had captured it. Discovering Hill 107 to be unoccupied, the Germans seized it.

This proved the critical point in the battle for Crete. The New Zealanders could no longer bring direct fire down on the Fallschirmjäger, leading to the complete capture of Maleme airfield. On the morning of 21 May, Luftwaffe transports began flying in reinforcements and matériel at the western end of the airfield, out of the defenders' line of fire, and the German hold on Maleme was strengthened. General Freyberg ordered a major counter-attack on the airfield during the night of 21/22 May, but this proved too little, too late, and he failed to commit early enough the two fresh battalions (18th and 20th) available to him. Once the decision had been made, Freyberg

It was 4 November 1941 before Lt Charles Upham of 20th Bn (far left) was presented in Egypt with the Victoria Cross for his gallantry in the counter-attack at Maleme airfield on 21/22 May – see Plate C1. Centre in this group is LtCol Howard Kippenberger, and at right is Maj Raymond Lynch. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; DA-023163-F)

Officers of C Coy, 20th Bn, 4th Bde having a brew in October 1941; these men had survived Greece and Crete, and were preparing for Operation *Crusader*. From left to right they are Lts Chesterman, Heenan, and Charles Upham VC, Capt Denver Fountaine, Lt White, and an unknown lieutenant. This image of Upham was taken with Fountaine's camera, and has remained unpublished until now; it shows his usual unkempt appearance, apparently complete with the famous 'yellow socks'. (Denver Fountaine Collection)

passed control of the operation to Brig Puttick, who in turn failed to concentrate additional forces to assist Brig Hargest, who was to direct the attack. The advance of the 20th, 21st and 28th Bns was delayed, and they were stalled by heavy German resistance. (It was during this failed attack that Lt Charles Upham of 20th Bn won his first Victoria Cross.)

Securing Maleme airfield gave the Germans the initiative. Heavily reinforced, they began advancing eastwards towards Canea, while a sizeable force threatened the New Zealanders' flank from Prison Valley. In an effort to stem the German advance in that sector, on 25 May Brig Kippenberger directed the now famous counter-attack by his makeshift 10th Bde that recaptured the hilltop village of Galatas at bayonet-point. This proved only a temporary tactical success; increasing pressure by the Germans, who made good use of their command of the air by bombing the defenders almost continuously, obliged the Allied forces to withdraw to the east to avoid being surrounded. On 27 May, Freyberg advised the theatre commander Gen Wavell that the Allied position on Crete was untenable, and arrangements were made for an evacuation to Egypt. The 2nd NZ Div withdrew with other Allied units to Sfakia on the south coast, where the majority of the exhausted division were evacuated by the Royal Navy on 31 May.

Crete was a disastrous battle for the New Zealand division. The ordeal exposed the inability of its veteran senior commanders to react quickly enough to the ever-changing challenges of mobile warfare, and greatly reduced the strength and morale of the combat units. The battle cost the division 671 killed in action, 967 wounded and evacuated, and 2,180 captured (including 488 wounded) – a total of 3,818 men out of the 7,702 New Zealanders on the island.

NORTH AFRICA, 1940–43

Operation *Crusader*, November 1941

After Crete it took the division – now an integral formation within British Eighth Army – another six months to regain its fighting strength.

Wavell had now been replaced as theatre commander by LtGen Sir Claude Auchinleck. In November 1941 the division, now rebuilt to

(Map from David Filer's *Kiwis in Khaki* – see Bibliography)

20,000 strong, played a major part in Operation *Crusader*, Auchinleck's offensive to destroy the newly arrived Afrikakorps and to relieve the besieged garrison of the port of Tobruk. The New Zealand division was on the right flank of Eighth Army's advance as part of XIII Corps, tasked with holding German and Italian forces in the Halfaya and Bardia sectors while securing the coastal approaches to Tobruk.

On 22 November, Freyberg was advised of the defeat of the British armoured brigades to the south, and that British units were trapped near the escarpment of Sidi Rezegh. He was ordered to create a corridor to Tobruk by capturing the high ground up to Ed Duda, including Sidi Rezegh, with the intention of linking up with a break-out from Tobruk. Two days later the division's 4th and 6th Bdes seized the escarpments of Sidi Rezegh and nearby Belhamed in fierce fighting. At the same time Rommel launched a flanking attack with two armoured divisions. Although the Tobruk garrison managed to break out and link up with the New Zealanders, Rommel's armoured columns had cut the lines of communication; this prevented 5th NZ Bde from coming westwards to the support of the other brigades.

Posed on 5 September 1941 during a training exercise (note the brassard at left), these officers are in rather more regulation KD turn-out, with Mk II helmets covered with small-mesh nets, and 1937 web equipment. The 2nd Echelon received British-made '37 pattern webbing in England in mid-1940, and it was issued to the rest of the division in Egypt late that year. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ; DA-01520-F)

The 5th Bde HQ, along with a battery of 25-pdrs, was positioned at Sidi Azez when, on 26 November, it was surrounded by an armoured column led by Rommel in person. After an action lasting two-and-a-half hours the position was overrun, and Brig Hargest, his surviving staff and 700 troops were captured, being marched off to Bardia in captivity. (While the majority were released seven weeks later when that town was recaptured by British forces, by that time all the unwounded officers had been sent to prison camps in Italy.)

Rommel then ordered his 15th and 21st Panzer Divs to destroy the New Zealand brigades, whose exposed positions at Sidi Rezegh and Belhamed offered little cover, before advancing on Tobruk. When the German attack came on 29 November the New Zealanders were forced to fight without the promised Allied support. Surrounded and greatly outnumbered, 24th and 26th Bns of 6th Bde at Sidi Rezegh suffered heavy casualties and were eventually overrun. The following morning what remained of 4th Bde at Belhamed was also overrun, after 1st South African Bde and a British armoured brigade failed to support them.

The surviving New Zealand remnants assembled at Zaafran east of Tobruk, where Freyberg decided to withdraw the division back toward Egypt rather than be trapped.

It was on this occasion that Gens Freyberg and Auchinleck clashed over the latter's intention to commit 5th Bde to an operation that promised heavy casualties. Frustrated at the lack of support, especially from British armour, Freyberg invoked his special charter. He was bitterly critical of the prevailing Eighth Army tendency to deploy in brigade-sized 'Jock columns' and static 'boxes' that were easily surrounded and destroyed by Rommel's armoured thrusts.

'Crusader' proved the 2nd NZ Div's most costly single operation during the war, with 879 men killed in action, 1,700 wounded and 2,042

Inspection of 2nd NZ Div personnel by Gen Auchinleck, the Middle East theatre commander. The Kiwis are dressed in summer field service clothing: the serge Field Service cap, long-sleeved KD shirt and shorts, long socks or 'hose tops', short puttees and ankle boots. They have 1937 webbing, and carry the SMLE Mk III* rifle. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; DA-02167-F)

taken prisoner. Freyberg later admitted that his insistence on withdrawing the division from the front to refit and recuperate was the only way he could see to safeguard its survival from the consequences of the faulty tactics with which Gen Auchinleck persisted.

Minqar Qaim, June 1942

Those same tactics nearly saw the division destroyed at Minqar Qaim in June 1942, after a period of recuperation in Syria. Late that month the successful German offensive in eastern Libya had forced the retreat of Eighth Army, and Freyberg rushed 2nd NZ Div on a 1,000-mile (1,600km) drive back from Syria to Mersa Matruh in Egypt.

After being advised that his division was to operate from the 'Matruh Box', Freyberg argued for a more flexible role. He had no intention of allowing his refreshed, well-trained and mobile division to be trapped in the open desert once again, and took it inland to the more defensible escarpment of Minqar Qaim. Although this position provided a tank obstacle to the north, it was exposed to enemy attack from the west; the eastern flank also needed protection, which was provided by the British 1st Armoured Brigade. Unfortunately, at the time Freyberg was placing his brigades, Auchinleck decided not to defend Matruh after all, and issued an order for a withdrawal to El Alamein. General Freyberg never received this order, and continued to defend his position in ignorance of the fact that his flank was no longer protected by British armour.

On 27 June 1942, Rommel assembled a force of four Italian and German divisions to contain the New Zealand position, and ordered 21st Panzer Div

In odd contrast to the KD desert uniform, this shows the snow clothing issued to men who attended the Ninth Army Ski School in Lebanon while 2nd NZ Div were recuperating in Syria in 1942 following Operation *Crusader*. The white camouflage clothing – a cap; a pullover smock with a hood, draw-cord waist, and front shoulder panels; over-trousers, and over-mittens – was locally made, as was the simplified white canvas version of the British Army's Bergen rucksack. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; DA-02456-F)

to attack. Now surrounded, the New Zealanders successfully held off repeated German armoured and infantry attacks throughout the day. That evening Freyberg determined to mount a break-out by the whole division to prevent its being overrun. While examining the German positions he was wounded in the neck, and command passed to Brig Inglis. The break-out attack began at 22.30hrs that night, with the three battalions of 4th Bde, under the command of Brig Jim Burrows, advancing silently with the bayonet until challenged by the enemy. The remainder of the division followed behind them, with the infantry packed into 900 vehicles assembled nine abreast.

In breaking the German cordon this surprise attack overran a laager of the 21st Panzer Div, causing great confusion and inflicting heavy casualties. In desperate close-quarter fighting the New Zealanders made liberal use of bayonets, 'Tommy guns' and hand grenades. (It was for his conduct during this action, and in later engagements at Ruweisat Ridge, that Charles Upham would be awarded his second Victoria Cross.) The division succeeded in fighting its way through, and withdrew to the El Alamein defensive line – still in good shape, but having sustained another 963 casualties. Rommel at first criticized the New Zealanders as 'gangsters' after he was told that they had killed some German wounded during the break-out, but he later accepted that such incidents inevitably occur during desperate and confused night-fighting.

2-inch mortar crew from C Coy, 26th Bn in the Western Desert; note the large-mesh helmet nets closing in a ring at the top. These soldiers are believed to be Pte Jack Collins of Westport, and Pte Pearson from Granity. (Regimental History Centre, Burnham Military Camp)

First El Alamein, July 1942

General Auchinleck now proposed that the New Zealand division defend the southern end of the El Alamein line, between the east–west features of Ruweisat and Alam Nayil ridges, in brigade battlegroups. However, Brig Inglis, who remained in command while Freyberg recovered from his wound, refused to allow this to happen.

The division next saw action on 3 July during 'first Alamein'. General Auchinleck decided to launch a counter-attack at Ruweisat Ridge, which had been partially occupied by two Axis divisions. The New Zealanders initially clashed with the Italian 'Ariete' Armd Div, which was seriously mauled by the division's artillery. Brigadier Inglis ordered 5th Bde to cut off the fleeing Italians at El Mreir near the western end of Ruweisat Ridge, where the brigade was forced the dig in after discovering superior enemy strength to their front.

On 14 July, 4th and 5th Bdes took part in a night attack on a feature of the ridge named Point 63, but this proved a failure. With limited intelligence of the enemy position, the New Zealand brigades nevertheless overran the German main defence line and seized the heights of the ridge; but this left them in exposed positions, with pockets of Germans still intact in their rear, and enemy armour to their front. The British armoured brigade directed to support the New Zealanders failed to engage the German armour when the latter launched a counter-attack, and 22nd Bn and the 23rd Bn HQ were captured – a total of 355 officers and men. Without armoured support the ridge was untenable, and Brig Inglis ordered the withdrawal of his brigades. The failure of the British tanks to support the New Zealanders destroyed any trust in the British armour, leading Gen Freyberg to determine that the New Zealand division had to have its own armoured brigade. The decimated

4th Bde was then withdrawn from the front line and sent back to Cairo, where it would eventually be re-formed as 4th NZ Armoured Brigade.

A week later, on the night of 21/22 July, the division suffered another defeat at the depression of El Mreir. When 6th Bde launched an attack, with 5th Bde in support, they managed to reach the depression only to find it defended by enemy armour, while they themselves once again lacked tank support. At daybreak the German tanks surrounded the depression and plastered the infantry battalions with shells, resulting in 6th Bde being overrun. The division's total casualties at Minqar Qaim and El Mreir were 4,721 men, of whom 822 were killed, 2,080 wounded and 1,819 taken prisoner.

Once again depleted and weary, 2nd NZ Div did not see action again until 3 September, when it was involved in an indecisive attack at Alam Nayil Ridge near the Munassib Depression. By this stage the division's strength was at its lowest – just 11,500 men.

Second El Alamein, October–November 1942

Nevertheless, Gen Freyberg and his division would play a pivotal role in the final victory at 'second Alamein' in late October. Lieutenant-General Bernard Montgomery now had command of Eighth Army, and was determined to achieve decisive success in a battle for which he prepared meticulously. The British 9th Armd Bde was placed under Freyberg's control when the New Zealand division was given the task of punching a hole in the Axis defensive line at Miteiriya Ridge on 23 October. The night attack, prepared by a massive artillery barrage, was successful, with the infantry battalions securing almost all their objectives despite determined resistance. The engineers cleared a path through the Axis minefield that allowed the Sherman tanks of 9th Armd Bde to consolidate the positions gained.

'Monty' considered Freyberg as his best fighting divisional commander, and used the New Zealanders in the forefront of the next major phase of what had turned into a battle of attrition. For this Operation *Supercharge* on 1 November, Freyberg was given – along with his two New Zealand brigades – two brigades of Highland infantry, two armoured brigades and 12 artillery regiments. His task was to penetrate the centre of Rommel's defensive line near Miteiriya Ridge, and force a general withdrawal by threatening the Axis rear lines. After three days of fierce fighting, and heavy losses on both sides, Freyberg's brigades managed to force their way through the defences, using the armour to exploit the gap made by the infantry. On 3 November, Freyberg was able to report to Montgomery that the Axis forces were in full retreat. The second battle of El Alamein and the subsequent pursuit of the enemy to the Libyan border cost the division 380 killed or died of wounds, 1,290 wounded, and just 41 prisoners of war.

Tebaga Gap, March 1943

The New Zealanders were prominent in Eighth Army's advance across Libya to the Tunisian border. Leading his highly motorized division, Freyberg was delegated to complete a series of 'left hook' outflanking movements through the desert to continually threaten the enemy's line of retreat. These occurred at El Agheila on 11 December 1942, and at Nofilia on 15 January 1943. By 23 January the Eighth Army had reached

the Libyan capital of Tripoli, while the Germans and Italians had retreated to a formidable defensive position known as the Mareth Line. The 2nd NZ Div rested at Tripoli until March 1943.

Freyberg's reputation as an outstanding divisional commander was then at its height, and Montgomery tasked him with capturing the strategically important Tebaga Gap, a narrow defile in the Matmata Hills at the extreme west of the Axis defensive line. For what was intended as another 'left hook' to get in behind the enemy flank, Freyberg would temporarily command his own division, British armour and artillery and a Free French unit in what was collectively termed the New Zealand Corps.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill inspects senior officers of 6th Bde in Tripoli, February 1943; note, on the upper sleeve at right, the brigade's red triangle patch. From left to right: MajGen Freyberg, Brig Howard Kippenberger (5th Bde), Churchill, Brig William Gentry (6th Bde), LtCol Charles Bennett (28th Maori Bn), LtCol Denver Fountaine (26th Bn), LtCol Jack Connelly (24th Bn), and LtCol Tom Morton (25th Battalion). On this occasion the entire division was paraded before the prime minister, who praised theirefforts, and referred to Bernard Freyberg as 'the salamander of the British Empire'. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; DA-03177-F)

On 20 March the corps moved out into the desert in great secrecy, but on its arrival it discovered that the Gap was alertly defended. The planned attack for the following day was postponed until the night of 21/22 March in an effort to reduce casualties by sending in the infantry under the cover of darkness. The attack by 6th Bde, supported by a heavy artillery barrage, secured a foothold in the Gap while taking 1,100 Italian prisoners. Freyberg was criticized for not immediately pushing his armour forward, but it later became clear that the Germans had reinforced the Tebaga area with two more divisions, and were well entrenched several miles further ahead. (Over the past two years there had been more than enough instances of British commanders throwing their tanks away on deadly 'Pak fronts' of German anti-tank guns.) For four days the infantry cleared the hills to the right of the Gap, advancing to the last ridge overlooking a vast plain.

The Eighth Army's main thrust against the Mareth Line faltered, and Montgomery then switched his effort towards finally seizing Tebaga Gap. Further reinforcements from X Corps were sent to assist in achieving this, with overall command passing to LtGen Brian Horrocks; Freyberg took this as a personal affront, and his relationship with Horrocks was strained. This did not prevent Operation *Supercharge II* from being a complete success, and the pass was captured on 26 March. It was during this operation that 2nd Lt Moananui-a-Kiwa Ngarimu of C Coy, 28th (Maori) Bn won a posthumous VC for his determined defence of a position during the fight for Point 209 (see Plate D3).

Enfidaville & Takrouna, April 1943

The 2nd NZ Div's last North African battle came in mid-April 1943, when 6th Bde was ordered to attack Enfidaville while 5th Bde was given the objectives of Takrouna and Djebel Bir.

Takrouna village was particularly difficult to secure; it was on a stone outcrop nearly 1,000 feet (300m) high, totally dominating the plains below and only accessible by attacking along a high ledge. On 19 April the division attacked at night under cover of a heavy barrage. Early in the battle 28th (Maori) Bn cleared Djebel Bir, the low ridge below Takrouna, but suffered heavy casualties in the process, especially among its officers. The Italian defenders put up a grim defence for another day and a night before both brigades, with substantial artillery support, finally captured their objectives.

When the North African campaign officially ended on 13 May 1943 the New Zealand division returned to Egypt for reinforcement and refitting. Casualties in the final campaign between 1 March and 13 May 1943 had been 385 killed, 1,284 wounded and 31 taken prisoner. It was decided that 6,000 soldiers with the longest service in the division would be given a six-month furlough back to New Zealand, while at the same time the now fully trained and equipped 4th NZ Armd Bde rejoined the division.

ITALY, 1943–45

The Sangro river & Orsogna, November 1943–January 1944

The division next saw action in Italy in late 1943. On 28 November they took part in the crossings of the Sangro, a natural defensive barrier that the Germans had fortified as part of the Adriatic end of their 'Gustav' defensive system. The river was in winter flood, but when the conditions were judged feasible 21st and 23rd Bns of 5th Bde made the initial crossing in single file, using ropes fastened to posts driven into both banks. Once a sizeable bridgehead had been secured a Bailey bridge was erected, allowing armour and artillery to cross. The crossing was followed by a divisional attack on the town of Castelfrentano, which was captured by 6th Bde on 1 December.

(Map from David Filer's *Kiwis in Khaki* – see Bibliography)

The hill-top town of Orsogna proved a more formidable obstacle. The 6th Bde managed to force their way into the town on 2 December, but were driven out by German tanks and infantry before their objectives could be secured. The 4th NZ Armd Bde had moved to outflank the town to the west, but the hilly terrain and the determined German defence frustrated this attempt. The terrain and conditions all favoured the defenders, and the fighting degenerated into a slogging match. When the snows arrived in early January 1944 the offensive ground to a halt.

Second Cassino, February 1944

When Gen Montgomery was transferred to command the British forces preparing for the Normandy landings he wanted to take the New Zealand division with him. Having great respect for Freyberg and his superbly mobile troops, he saw that their full capabilities could not be exploited while they were bogged down on the Adriatic front in Italy. 'Monty' was denied the New Zealanders, however; in mid-January 1944 the division, along with 4th Indian Div, was transferred from LtGen Oliver Leese's Eighth Army westwards to the Cassino sector, where they came under the control of LtGen Mark Clarke's US Fifth Army.

These two divisions – considered the most experienced in Eighth Army – served together at Cassino, where they formed, with the British 78th Div, II New Zealand Corps under Freyberg's command. At this time Brig Kippenberger succeeded to command of 2nd NZ Div, and after he was seriously wounded it would pass to Brig Graham 'Ike' Parkinson.

Notoriously, the Cassino sector was a solid anchor for Field Marshal Kesselring's Gustav Line. Near the southern end of this roughly north–south defensive sector, the German-held town of Cassino was dominated by mountains immediately to its north and west that allowed enemy observation of all Allied activity. The north–south Rapido river made an eastwards loop around Cassino, providing a natural moat that the Allies had to cross under fire before they could advance into the town. The Germans had also flooded low-lying areas, limiting the Allied troops to approaches on a narrow front.

The New Zealand Corps was first committed in February 1944, following the failure of the first attempt by US II Corps in late January. The strategic purpose of the renewed attack was to break into the Liri valley, leading northwards towards Rome, and to link up with a planned Allied break-out from the Anzio beachhead on the west coast. Freyberg's plan was for 4th Indian Div to hook down through the mountains north of the town and take Monastery Hill behind it; the New Zealanders were to cross the Rapido south of the town, using a railway embankment across the flooded fields to approach German strongpoints around the station, and thus opening a narrow corridor for Allied armour to get up Highway 6 into the mouth of the Liri valley.

The long-established Cassino defences were manned by the crack German 1st Paratroop Division. Always wary of sustaining unnecessary casualties, Freyberg – backed by Gen Tuker of 4th Indian Div – argued that the monastery on the summit of Monastery Hill, which dominated 2nd NZ Div's frontage for the attack, was being used by the Germans to observe Allied movements, and that it needed to be destroyed before he could move. This decision is still controversial. The monastery's abbey was a medieval jewel, and evidence of its occupation by the Germans was speculative, though there is no doubt that they had dug-in virtually up to its walls. Freyberg received the support of Gen Sir Harold Alexander, the Allied C-in-C Italy, and on 15 February the USAAF virtually destroyed the monastery (whereupon the Germans did indeed move into the ruins, which now offered excellent positions).

The first assault opened on the night of 17 February. Two companies of 28th (Maori) Bn the led the way across the Rapido and along the embankment to the railway station south of the town. Despite minefields and heavy machine-gun and mortar fire the Maori got into the station complex; but by daybreak the bridging of the river to bring across tanks and AT guns was still incomplete, and a heavy counter-attack led by Panzers forced the withdrawal of the two companies late that afternoon, at a cost of 128 of their 200 men.

Third Cassino, March 1944

Bad weather delayed the next attempts until mid-March. On the 15th, Cassino town was destroyed by US bombers as a prelude to a renewed attack by the New Zealand Corps. The raid was followed by an eight-hour artillery barrage; while this raged, the Indians were again tasked with assaulting Monastery Hill, and 6th NZ Bde, supported by Shermans of 19th Armd Regt, advanced into the ruined town from the north. Predictably, the chaotic rubble and craters caused by the bombing seriously hindered the movement of the tanks, leaving the infantry to fight a largely unsupported house-to-house battle against the stubborn

The potent 17-pdr Firefly conversion of the Sherman tank did not arrive in Italy until October 1944, and was everywhere in such short supply that only one could be provided to each tank troop. This Sherman VC Firefly of 19th Armd Regt, 4th NZ Armd Bde has its turret traversed to the rear for transportation, with the long gun covered by a tarpaulin. Considerable trouble was taken to disguise Fireflies as much as possible, since they were a priority target for enemy gunners. The open square painted on the turret side identifies the unit's B Sqn, with the tank's individual tactical number '13' on the hull. The crew are casually dressed in KD shirts and shorts with the black tanker's beret. (Mark Herman Collection)

Fallschirmjäger. The 25th Bn managed to secure parts of the town and the important Castle Hill, but on their left 26th Bn's attack was delayed by more than three hours. The attack bogged down in bitter close-range fighting in a bewildering maze of rubble-slopes, teetering walls and half-buried cellars.

This continued for no less than five days, and Gen Freyberg would later be criticized for not committing his reserves (either 5th NZ Bde or a brigade from British 78th Div) sooner. On 17 March the 24th Bn entered the town; some tanks managed to give useful support, and 26th Bn reached and captured the railway station at heavy cost. From their strongholds in the ruins of the Continental Hotel and the Hotel de Roses in the south-west of the town the Germans could fire on the Indian troops on the slopes above them, and these heavily fortified positions beat back several attacks. In the early hours of the 19th an assault by 28th (Maori) Bn on the Continental Hotel ground to a halt due to stiff resistance and the inability of the tanks to manoeuvre through the rubble in the dark. That night Gen Freyberg finally committed the rest of 5th NZ Bde and 11th Bde from 78th Div to the town. Frustrating and costly fighting continued for another three days, but on 23 March he reported to Gen Clarke that his corps could make no further progress.

The II NZ Corps was disbanded on 26 March, and Gen Freyberg reverted to his divisional command. In April the 2nd NZ Div moved up into the mountains in a holding role under British X Corps. Its two battles at Cassino had cost it 211 killed, 1,156 wounded and 141 missing. In all, it had suffered 3,200 casualties in five months in Italy; it was now in serious need of reinforcements, and these would include 4,000 men from the disbanded 3rd NZ Div in the Pacific.

The Gothic Line, July 1944–April 1945

In July the division moved from Arce to Lake Trasimene, near Perugia, where 6th Bde helped seize Monte Lignano in an effort to break German

(continued on page 33)

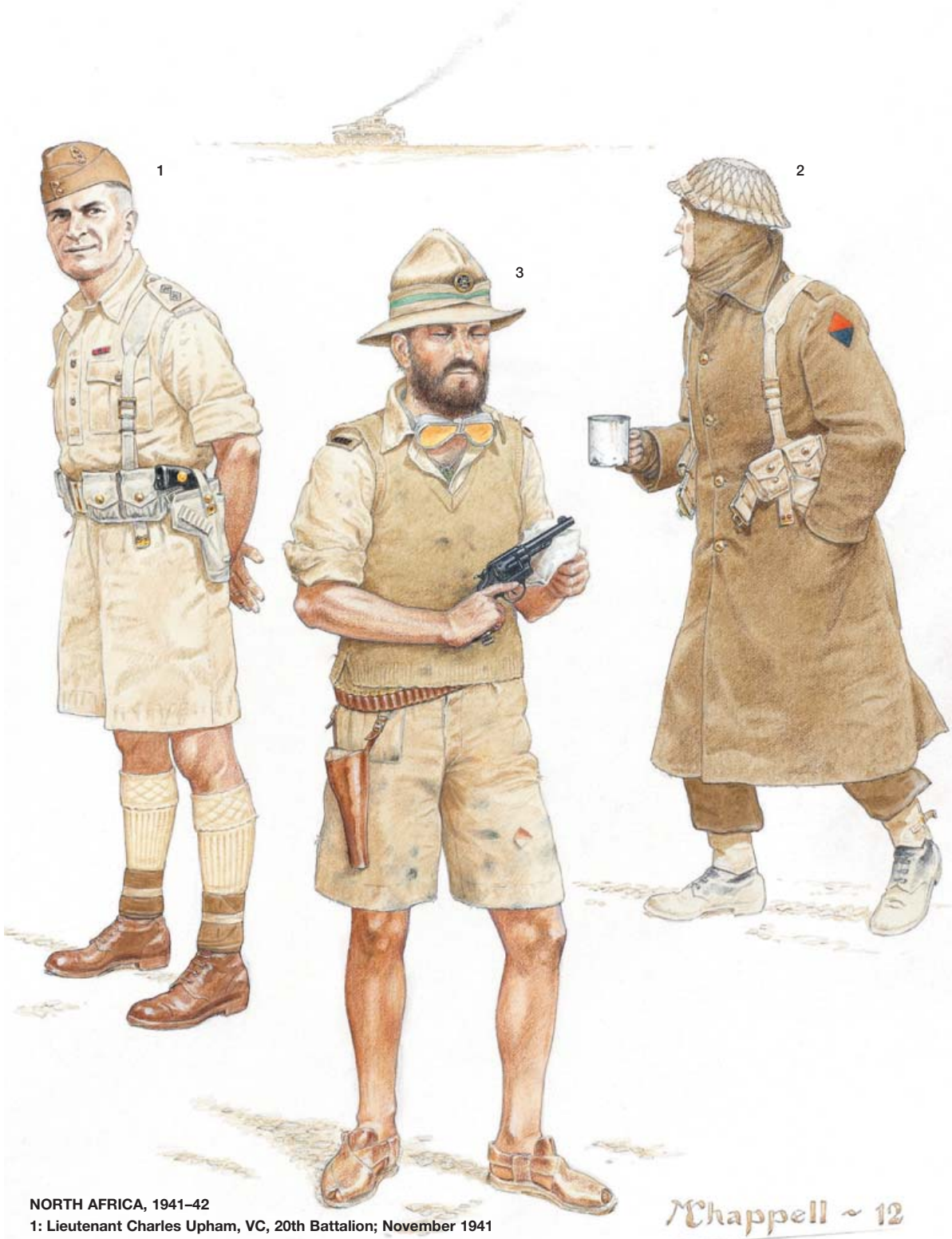
NEW ZEALAND & UK, 1940
1: Gunner, NZ Field Artillery; 1st Echelon, New Zealand, January 1940
2: Lieutenant, 23rd Battalion; 2nd Echelon, UK, July 1940
3: Sergeant, NZ Engineers; 3rd Echelon, New Zealand, August 1940

GREECE & CRETE, 1941

1: Lieutenant, Divisional Cavalry; Greece, April 1941

2: Private, 27th (Machine Gun) Battalion; Crete, May 1941

3: Major-General Bernard Freyberg, VC, DSO; Crete, May 1941**



NORTH AFRICA, 1941–42
1: Lieutenant Charles Upham, VC, 20th Battalion; November 1941
2: Gunner, 7th Anti-Tank Regiment; Operation *Crusader*, November 1941
3: Trooper, Long Range Desert Group; Libya, 1942

NORTH AFRICA, 1942–43

1: Staff Nurse, NZ Army Nursing Service, Service Dress; Egypt, 1942

2: Driver, NZ Army Service Corps; El Alamein, October 1942

3: 2nd Lieutenant Te Moananui-a-kiwa Ngarimu, VC, 28th (Maori) Battalion; Tebaga Gap, Tunisia, March 1943

ITALY, 1943–44

1: Warrant officer, 26th Battalion; Sangro river crossing, November 1943

2: Trooper, 19th Armoured Regiment; Orsogna, December 1943

3: Sergeant, 28th (Maori) Battalion; Gothic Line, July 1944

THE PACIFIC, 1943–44

1: Private, 37th Battalion, 14th Brigade; Vella Lavella, September 1943

2: Medical orderly, 7th Field Ambulance, 8th Brigade; Mono Island, October 1943

3: Clerk, Women's Army Auxiliary Corps; New Caledonia, 1944

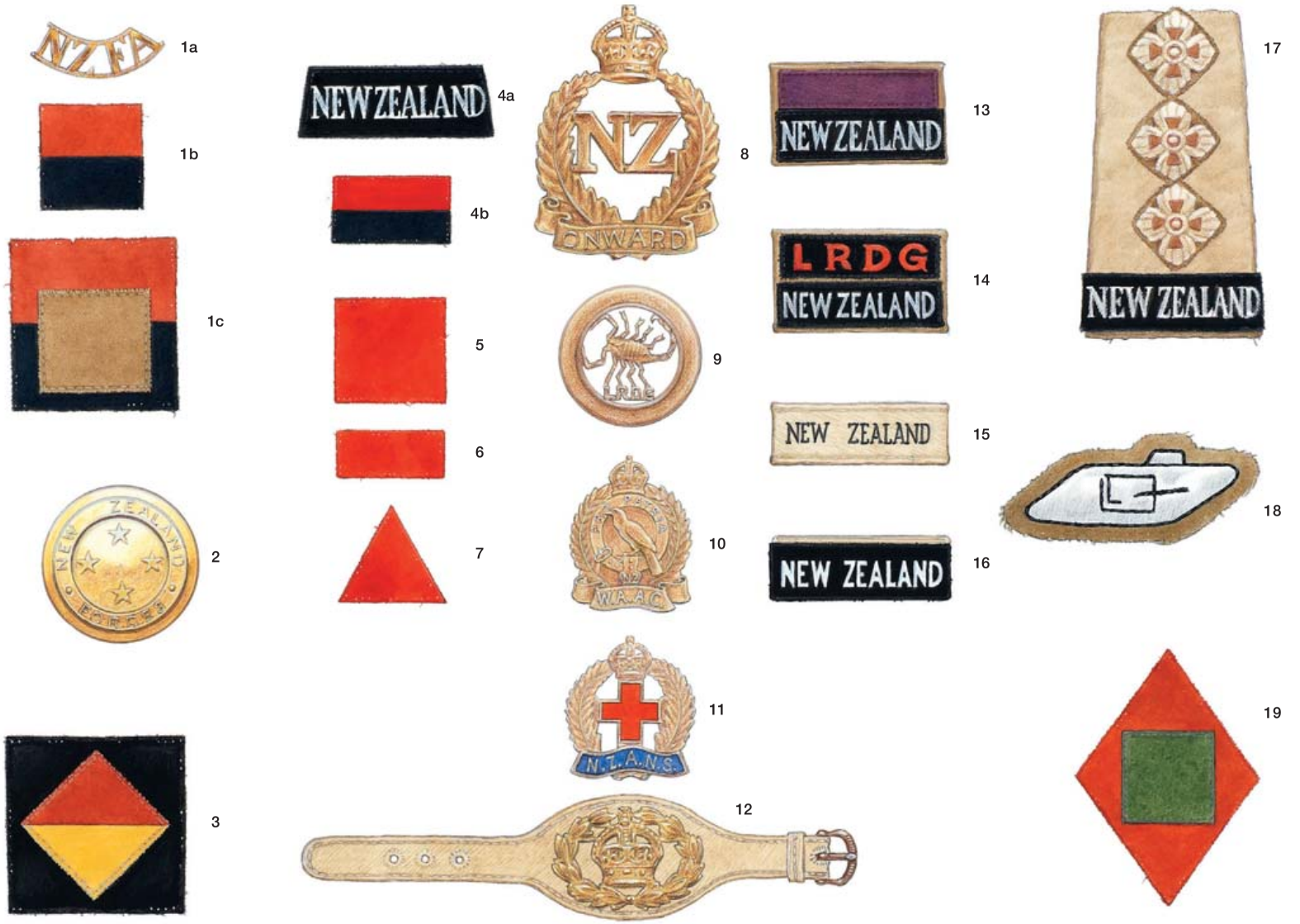
ITALY, 1945

1: Colonel Denver Fountaine, DSO, MC, ED*, MiD; 2 NZEF Forward Base, Bari, January 1945

2: Corporal, NZ Signal Corps; Trieste, May 1945

3: Private, 2nd NZ Division; local leave, Venice, July 1945

H: INSIGNIA
See commentary text for details



The red square sleeve patch identifies this infantry patrol near Faenza, Italy, in December 1944 as from 4th Armd Bde, and thus presumably from the motorized 22nd Battalion. The corporal section-leader in the foreground carries an M1928A1 Thompson SMG and a map case; note also the full-size shovel tucked behind his haversack. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; DA-07953-F)

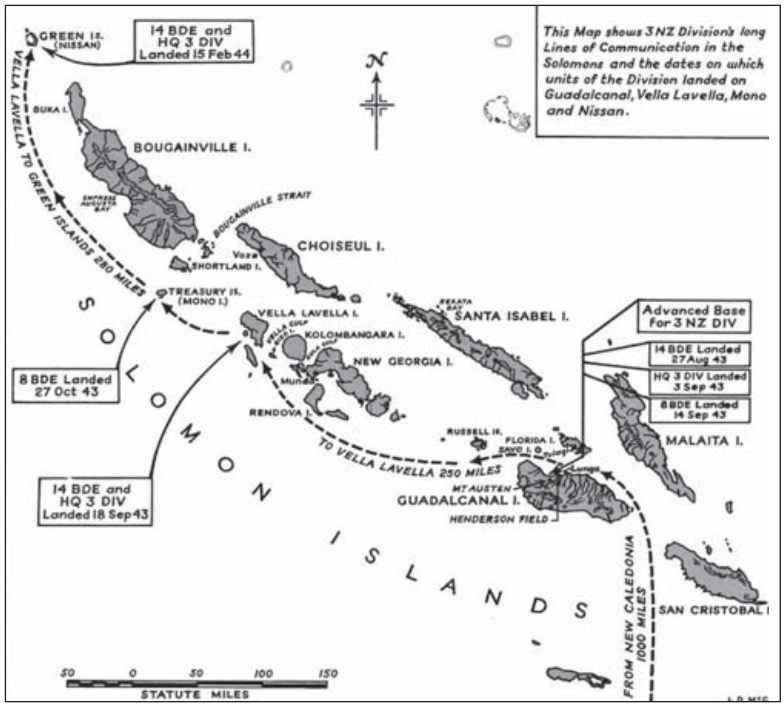
defences protecting Florence and the River Arno. The division acted as right flank guard for XIII Corps when Arezzo was captured on 16 July, and its seizure of the eastern crests of the Pian dei Cerri Hills on 3 August was the turning-point in the capture of Florence. The army commander, Gen Leese, described the 2nd NZ Div attack as 'magnificent', but it cost 953 casualties including 214 killed.

The division was then transferred eastwards to the Adriatic coast, where heavy seasonal rain aided the German defence. The New Zealanders worked together with a Canadian division to drive towards Ravenna, advancing steadily by means of a series of brigade attacks, but once the advance reached the Fiumicino river it was stalled by the bad weather.

At this time the division was reorganized. To resolve the shortage of infantry, during winter 1944/45 the Divisional Cavalry and 27th (MG) Bn were converted into infantry battalions, and, along with 22nd Bn, provided a third infantry brigade, designated 9th Brigade. The three tank regiments of 4th Armd Bde were then attached, one to each infantry brigade, to provide mobile fire support. In December the division forced the Germans to withdraw from Faenza, which saw the New Zealanders advancing to the Senio river by the time the campaign halted over the worst winter months.

The final equipment to reach the division's 7th AT Regt was the lethal, long-barrelled 17-pdr gun with advanced armour-piercing ammunition, capable of defeating the heaviest German armour at battle ranges. This crew were photographed in January 1945, in the depth of the Italian winter. The gunner at left wears a knitted cap and has acquired a sheepskin collar, presumably attached to his leather jerkin rather than the BD bouse worn beneath it. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; DA-08050-F)

By April 1945 the Allies were ready for their final push to break into the east–west valley of the River Po, the Germans' last natural defensive barrier before the Alps. As part of British XIII Corps, 2nd NZ Div performed a series of successful forced river crossings over the Senio and the Santerno. At the Gaiana river the division was again


This Map shows 3 NZ Division's long Lines of Communication in the Solomons and the dates on which units of the Division landed on Guadalcanal, Vella Lavella, Mono and Nissan.
GREEN IS. (NISSAN)
14 BDE and HQ 3 DIV Landed 15 Feb 44
VELLA LAVELLA TO GREEN ISLANDS 280 MILES
BUKA I.
BOUGAINVILLE I.
BOUGAINVILLE STRAIT
CHOISEUL I.
Vaza
SHORTLAND I.
TREASURY IS. (MONO I.)
VELLA LAVELLA I.
KOLOMBANGARA I.
NEW GEORGIA I.
SANTA ISABEL I.
Advanced Base For 3 NZ DIV
14 BDE Landed 27 Aug 43
HQ 3 DIV Landed 3 Sep 43
8 BDE Landed 14 Sep 43
8 BDE Landed 27 Oct 43
Munda
RENDOVA I.
RUSSELL IS.
FLORIDA I.
TO VELLA LAVELLA 250 MILES
MALAITA I.
Lunga
MT AUSTEN
GUADALCANAL I.
HENDERSON FIELD
14 BDE and HQ 3 DIV Landed 18 Sep 43
SOLOMON ISLANDS
FROM NEW CALEDONIA 1000 MILES
SAN CRISTOBAL I
50 0 50 100 150
STATUTE MILES

opposed by German paratroopers, from whom they extracted heavy payment for the agonies the New Zealanders had suffered at Cassino. By the end of April the Germans were in full retreat, and the division crossed the Po and raced on to Venice. The New Zealanders ended the Italian campaign by securing the city of Trieste from Tito's Yugoslav Partisans.

The losses to the 2nd NZ Division during the whole Italian campaign had been significant: a total of 8,668 casualties, including 1,825 killed.

3rd NZ DIVISION IN THE PACIFIC

Under the command of MajGen Harold Barrowclough, the 13,000 men of the 3rd NZ Div had been transferred to New Caledonia by February 1943. For nine months thereafter 8th and 14th Bdes trained in jungle and amphibious warfare prior to their first mission in the Solomon Islands.

The first of the division's three combat operations opened on 18 September 1943, when 14th Bde was tasked with capturing the northern part of the island of Vella Lavella. On that day 3,700 New Zealanders landed on the island and, operating in two large combat teams, flushed out the Japanese. By 6 October the main enemy force was thought to be trapped, but it managed to escape the island in barges during the night.

The division's next task was the capture of the Treasury group by a combined New Zealand–American effort under the overall command of Gen Barrowclough. The objectives included Mono and Stirling Islands, which Barrowclough allocated to 8th Brigade. For New Zealanders this operation had a special resonance, since it was to be their first opposed amphibious landing since Gallipoli in 1915. The brigade landed on Mono on 27 October, meeting only light initial resistance. As they moved inland the fighting increased, with the Japanese making two failed attempts to break through the New Zealand perimeter, but 'organized' resistance was declared at an end on 3 November. The landing on Stirling Island was unopposed.

The division's last combat operation was the capture of the Green Islands, of which the largest was Nissan. On 15 February 1944, 14th Bde and 3rd NZ Div HQ landed without encountering opposition. There were a number of minor actions while the force spread out across the island group, leading to the destruction of the small Japanese garrison at a light cost in New Zealand casualties.

This bivouac on a South Pacific island is dug into the ground and covered with coconut logs, shelter fabric and palm leaves. Keeping the incessant tropical downpours out was almost as important to the men of 3rd NZ Div as overhead cover from Japanese fire. (Barry O' Sullivan Collection)

The 3rd NZ Div was officially disbanded in August 1944, although the majority of the now 17,000-strong force had already been withdrawn from the South Pacific theatre by that time. The division sustained only 280 casualties during its existence, including 82 deaths.

UNIFORMS & EQUIPMENT

New Zealand closely followed the British Army in the adoption of uniforms and clothing. The 2 NZEF went overseas with Service Dress, in both drab and khaki versions (in British parlance, 'khaki' and 'khaki drill'), and a fatigue uniform. Later Battledress was introduced, along with lightweight field service clothing. Initially officers, warrant officers and other ranks had different designs of uniform. While the universal battledress was issued from May 1940, for more formal use officers still retained Service Dress in drab and pale khaki versions.

Service Dress

The officer's uniform was made from a drab-coloured barathea or, more commonly, whipcord fabric. The jacket had open lapels and four front pockets, and four large brass 'NZ Forces' front buttons. Rank, in the British sequence, was worn on the shoulder straps. A smaller version of the brass general service 'Onward' cap badge (see below, 'Badges & Insignia', and Plate H8) was worn on the collars, and brass titles on the shoulder straps. The jacket was worn with a shirt and tie. A fabric belt was worn when the 'Sam Browne' and cross strap were not required. Officers also provided themselves with a khaki drill version of the SD uniform for wear in hot weather; on these they had the option of using bronze or bakelite 'NZ Forces' buttons.

Warrant Officers wore an SD jacket that was a cross between the officers' and other ranks' models; it had officers' bellows pockets below the waist, but the front closed to the collar with five buttons. Rank was worn on the forearms.

The Other Ranks jacket was made from a drab serge fabric and closed down the front with five 'NZ Forces' buttons. The collar was the stand-and-fall type, closed with a pair of hooks-and-eyes. There were two patch pockets on the chest and two internal hanging pockets below the waist.

Staff Sergeant Bill Fenton, photographed in 1940 before he left for active service, which would see him serve as a CSM and Temporary RSM in 24th Bn until he was wounded at El Alamein and sent home. The Service Dress jacket is the model for Warrant Officers and members of Permanent Staff, with a closed collar but – invisible here – bellows skirt pockets. On the cap and collars are the badges of Regular Service Recruits; note also the Sam Browne belt. (Damien Fenton Collection)

Three NZ Army Service Corps soldiers wearing the World War I pattern SD uniform, still in production early in the war; note too the 1908 pattern web belts. Two wear white lanyards – the distinguishing colour of the NZASC. All wear the 'Onward' badge on their collars, curved brass 'NZASC' titles on their shoulder straps, and first-type sleeve patches identifying the corps' Ammunition Company. This patch system was worn by the 1st and 3rd Echelons of 2 NZEF on SD jackets and initially by the 3rd Echelon on battledress. When worn on khaki drill clothing the patches were temporarily attached with snap-fasteners. (Barry O'Sullivan Collection)

Two 2nd Echelon officers pose with a shot-down Luftwaffe aircraft in England, 1940, wearing the recently introduced NZ-made battledress and British 1937 web equipment. On their helmets are No.2 camouflaged anti-gas covers with 'curtains'. The Mk VI respirator (gas mask) haversacks are worn in the 'alert' position on the chest, the flap opening away from the body. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; 1/4-017861-4)

Officers and Warrant Officers Class 1 wore the brown leather Sam Browne belt with cross strap when in Service Dress; officers also had the option of wearing the holster, sword frog and ammunition pouch of this set. Between April and September 1941 it became optional for the Sam Browne to be worn without the cross strap.

Denim uniform

A hard-wearing, khaki-coloured denim fatigue jacket and trousers were issued to enlisted ranks for training and fatigue duties. The jacket had a low standing collar and was closed down the front by five metal 'bachelor' buttons.

Battledress

From February 1940 a new Battledress suit of drab serge was introduced, closely resembling the original British Army 1937 pattern 'Battledress, Serge'. The blouse had a stand-and-fall collar, shoulder straps, box-pleated chest pockets with single-point flaps, and a waistband that was gathered to a buckled half-belt in front. The hanging inside pockets and partial lining were made from khaki drill. All the buttons had 'fly' coverings except those securing the shoulder straps. Initially the collar was closed by a pair of brass hooks-and-eyes.

The battledress trousers had a large flapped 'map' pocket on the front of the left thigh, and a small open wound-dressing pocket on the front of the right hip. On the right rear hip was an internal pocket with a flap,

Bombardier Jack Poynter, 20th AT Bty, 3rd NZ Division. After serving in the Territorial Force, he enlisted for overseas service in 1942, and was transferred to the 3rd NZ Div in the Solomon Islands in 1943. He saw action with 8th Bde on Mono Island that October, and was repatriated to New Zealand when the division was disbanded in 1944. He wears the FS cap at a fashionably exaggerated tilt; note the fly-covered buttons and box pleats retained for the NZ battledress after the British version had been simplified for economy. The lanyard just visible on his right shoulder identifies his bombardier status. (John Poynter Collection)

and there were 'slash' pockets in either side. Spaced around the waist were three buttoned belt loops, and at the rear were three buttons to attach to buttonholes inside the rear of the blouse waistband. Originally the bottoms of the trouser legs were made with a tab and two buttons for gathering; these were discontinued in February 1942, but in November 1942 leather stiffeners were added.

Photographed late in the war, this Kiwi is wearing the battledress blouse open over a collared shirt and tie. While officers could always wear the BD collar open, it was not until January 1945 that other ranks were officially permitted to do the same. Initially the blouse collar was closed with brass hooks-and-eyes, but from March 1942 these were replaced with a cloth tab under the left collar and a button under the right (a method already used in April–May 1941 when the supply of hooks-and-eyes temporarily ran out). The British-made General Service cap bears the 'Onward' badge on a black diamond backing, and the 2nd NZ Div's white-on-black slip-on national titles are worn on the shoulder straps. (Barry O'Sullivan Collection)

Field service dress

In the Middle East, as NZ-made khaki drill items wore out they were replaced with Indian- and Egyptian-made summer clothing of cotton or cellular fabric. Indian-made 'Shorts, Khaki Drill with Turn Ups' (the so-called 'Bombay bloomers') and Egyptian-made bush shirts were often converted in minor ways by the soldiers. Officers could purchase a bush jacket for casual wear, and some also acquired locally-made overalls for use in the field. Indian-made light khaki overalls were issued to units operating machinery, such as transport personnel and engineers. These had a low standing collar, a half-belt at the rear, and left chest and left thigh pockets both with flaps.

Headgear

The regulation headgear for officers was the peaked (visored) Service Dress cap, and for the other ranks the Field Service or side cap. The national headdress of the New Zealand Army was the 'Hat, Felt' with the crown shaped to a point (in US parlance, a 'Montana peak'), giving rise to the nickname 'lemon-squeezer'. The hat was dressed with a three-fold puggaree displaying distinctive arm-of-service colours (e.g. the central fold was red for Infantry, green for Cavalry, dark blue for Engineers, white for Army Service Corps, etc, between two khaki folds; the artillery had a dark blue/ red/ dark blue puggaree). The 'Onward' badge was worn on the front. The hat was worn on formal occasions, but it had a vent either side of the crown, and provided good sun protection in the field. These hats were made in New Zealand; some officers bought English-made examples, which had a taped brim. Oddly, it was when the 2nd NZ Div left Egypt for Greece in 1941 that they were issued with Indian-made 'solar topee' pith helmets or British-made cork Foreign Service helmets.

In July 1944 the British-made General Service cap – a large drab beret rising from a separate band – replaced the FS cap for all

Private Hector Henderson poses in summer field service clothing and 1937 web equipment during his basic infantry training; he later served with 7th AT Regt in Italy. He wears the Mk II helmet, KD long-sleeved shirt and shorts, long khaki socks or 'hose tops', and ankle-puttees over his black boots. (Henderson Family Collection)

Officers of 3rd NZ Div training on the Treasury Islands, wearing NZ-made khaki drill clothing that has been sprayed with a brown and green camouflage pattern (except the trousers second right, which are solid 'bottle-green'). They show a mix of pullover shirts (tucked in, pointed pocket flaps) and bush shirts (worn outside trousers, straight flaps). The green, floppy-brim jungle hat was made with a high crown for better ventilation. The web equipment has also been camouflage-sprayed; see Plate F2. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ; WH 0558)

junior ranks of 2 NZEF in Italy and Egypt. The GS cap was worn pulled to the right, with a black diamond patch behind the 'Onward' badge above the left eye. The NZ Armoured Corps were allowed to wear the British RAC black beret, and on this the 4th NZ Armd Bde wore red backing behind the 'Onward' badge, and the Divisional Cavalry green backing. A khaki beret was worn both by field-grade officers, and members of the 22nd (Mot) Bn; this unit wore a red flash behind the badge.

Early in 1941 the New Zealanders in the Long Range Desert Group were issued with the traditional Arab *keffiyeh* headdress and black cord *agal*, which were worn both as practical desert wear and with formal dress.

Jungle uniform

The 8th Bde that garrisoned Fiji from November 1940 left New Zealand with old World War I khaki drill clothing. This had not stored well, and once in Fiji better khaki garments – officers' SD, trousers, shirts, shorts and bush jackets – were made up locally from Indian fabric; jackets were often lined with muslin and had removable buttons.

When the 3rd NZ Div arrived in New Caledonia in October 1942 they still lacked good-quality tropical clothing. Soldiers were obliged to purchase American tan-coloured 'chino' shirts and trousers for 'tropical best', which they wore on Guadalcanal in August 1943. At this time a

New Zealand-produced KD uniform was issued, consisting of a pullover shirt, bush shirt, and battledress trousers. Practical combat clothing was still unavailable, and since sufficient green dye could not be obtained the new KD clothing was camouflage-painted (see Plate F2). Also included in the fighting dress were a 'bottle-green' jungle hat and anti-mosquito gloves. New Zealand-made canvas and rubber jungle boots were delivered but were little used, since they were coloured white due to lack of available dye. Canvas leggings were also developed, but not widely issued.

After landing on Vella Lavella wearing KD the 14th Bde were soon issued with US-made combat uniforms consisting of olive drab herringbone twill jackets (of both first and second US Army patterns), matching trousers and short-visored HBT caps. The 8th Bde on Guadalcanal were issued with the NZ camouflage-sprayed clothing for operations on Mono and Stirling islands in October–November 1943. The 14th Bde also received it on Vella Lavella for operations on Nissan Island in February 1944. When the division was withdrawn to New Caledonia in July 1944 the men were issued with unpainted NZ-made KD uniforms consisting of a pullover shirt with a necktie, bush shirt and battledress trousers, worn with the 'Hat, Felt'.

The NZ Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was formed in 1942, to perform welfare, medical and clerical roles. Initially the NZWAACs wore male garments until female equivalents could be manufactured. The officer's SD jacket, in either drab or KD, was worn with a broad-brimmed, flat-crowned brown felt hat, a skirt, stockings and brown shoes (see left & centre; NZWAACs wore the badge of the unit to which they were attached pinned above the left pocket). The BD (right, worn with an FS cap) differed in having three-point pocket flaps, no internal pockets, and two button-tabs inside the front waist; the trousers had a buttoned fly at the left hip, and two extra buttons for the blouse tabs inside the front. Special brown boots were also issued. (Mark Herman Collection)

Footwear

The leather ankle boot was tan for officers and warrant officers and black for other ranks. New Zealand maintained supplies of boots throughout the war, though some British-made boots were issued to fill temporary shortages, and some officers bought British brown leather boots. In the Pacific some soldiers of 3rd NZ Div acquired US green canvas and rubber jungle boots. Brown Oxford-style shoes were worn by officers with Service Dress, and from late 1942 all ranks of 2nd NZ Div were permitted either black or brown shoes or boots of civilian pattern when working in offices, when off-duty or 'walking out'.

Overcoats and jerkins

Enlisted ranks of the Echelons embarked in 1940 had either the NZ pattern World War I greatcoat or the British 1902 Dismounted pattern. The New Zealand type had five front buttons, turn-back cuffs, a ticket pocket to the left and two waist pockets; the fronts of the shoulders were reinforced with 'strapping' (in the British term, 'rifle patches'). The 1902 pattern also had five buttons but had no shoulder strapping, turn-back cuffs or ticket pocket. These early coats were worn on active service until the British 1940 Dismounted pattern was issued; this was double-breasted with two rows of four buttons, and two pockets.

Officers might optionally supply themselves with a Universal pattern greatcoat and/ or a shorter 'Warm Coat'. The former was double-breasted and had turn-back cuffs; the front was closed by four brass buttons, and some examples were made with a sword slit to the left side. The 'Officer's Warm' was introduced in 1926 for use by Territorial officers. It was double-breasted, with two

Loaded down while in transit in Italy, this NZWAAC wears Service Dress with the specially designed WAAC greatcoat; her hat bears the brass badge of the corps. Other female garments issued were dresses, shirts, khaki neckties, jerseys, cardigans, aprons, raincoats and brown leather gloves. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; PAColl-1913-01)

rows of four leather 'NZ Forces' buttons to the front; it had shoulder straps and two pockets, with a sword slit on the left. Officers might also purchase waterproof trench coats; these were double-breasted, with fabric waist belts and cuff straps.

British-pattern brown leather jerkins were issued to the troops in bad weather; these were lined with flannel fabric and closed by four large plastic dished buttons. New Zealanders serving in the LRDG were issued with British-made canvas overcoats for protection against the extreme cold of the desert nights; these 'Tropal' coats were partially lined with either sheepskin or kapok, closed at the front by sprung metal clips or toggles-and-loops respectively, and had wide serge-lined collars. Motorcyclists in Italy were issued with the British 1942 waterproof coat made of rubberized fabric.

Miscellaneous clothing

Officers of 2 NZEF wore a cotton shirt with separate collar and tie under their Service Dress uniform. Other ranks wore a collarless flannel work shirt under their SD and BD uniforms. As the war progressed, Egyptian- and Indian-made cellular and flannel shirts with collars attached were issued, as were many US-made olive drab flannel shirts in Italy. In New Zealand and later in the war, pullover KD shirts with collars attached were issued to reinforcements.

The 2nd NZ Div were issued with NZ-made woollen jerseys and various Indian-made patterns. Some had three buttons to the front, some slots and buttons for the shirt shoulder straps, and some were plain. Gloves, mittens, scarves, skull caps and balaclavas were all knitted at home by families and patriotic guilds and posted to troops overseas. Socks were issued, but might also be home-knitted. Thin ankle socks were worn with knitted 'hose tops'; heavier woollen socks were knee length. Officers supplied themselves with fine knit knee-length socks for wear when in shorts.

Khaki web anklets were worn with the battledress trousers, or short ankle-puttees over the socks when shorts were worn. The 2nd NZ Div were issued with British-made khaki anklets – the only piece of newly-developed webbing worn by the early Echelons. The 3rd NZ Div were issued with Canadian-made web anklets, and, as part of their subsequent jungle kit, with NZ-made canvas gaiters. These were closed by three loops and eyelets and had a buckled strap to the top, resembling naval gaiters.

Badges & insignia (see also Plate H)

The universal badge of 2 NZEF was introduced in October 1939: the letters 'NZ' surrounded by fern fronds and surmounted by the King's crown, all above a scroll bearing the word 'Onward'. The badge was produced in brass, or bronze for officers. Hat and collar versions were worn on SD uniforms by all ranks, but collar badges were not worn on the BD blouse. This was supposed to be the only badge worn, although this was not strictly adhered to; pre-war brass arm-of-service shoulder titles were also issued until stocks were exhausted.

Initially, a complicated system of unit colour patches was worn on the upper sleeves by all ranks, to indicate arm of service, formation, and unit. The 'basic' patch was 2½ inches square, in the arm-of-service colour. Onto this was sewn a smaller drab patch in a shape identifying the unit within the regiment or brigade. Above the basic patch was a smaller one, again of the arm-of-service colour, and of varied shapes. Confusingly, this was called the 'formation' patch, but it might identify either a regiment, brigade or other element. This patch system was used by the first three Echelons, but was replaced in September 1940 with a simplified system used for the rest of the war.

This second system consisted of the 'formation' patch only, above which a white-on-black 'New Zealand' title was initially sewn. This national title was later made with a cotton loop so that it could be slipped over the shoulder strap of the shirt, BD blouse or officer's SD jacket. These titles might be hand-embroidered, machine-stitched or, later, printed, and embroidered bullion titles were sometimes privately purchased for 'best'.

The trio of World War I ribbons above his left pocket reveal that it is the 'second time out' for this sergeant; under magnification, a Mentioned in Dispatches oakleaf can be seen on the ribbon of his 1918 Victory Medal. He wears a khaki drill SD jacket with – as was the practice early in the war – his rank chevrons on both sleeves. The 'Onward' badge is pinned to his 'Hat, Felt' and his collars. The first-type sleeve patches identify his unit as either the Employment Platoon or the Bath Unit of 2nd NZ Div Headquarters. (Mark Herman Collection)

In the Pacific the 3rd NZ Div had their own coloured unit patches that were sewn to the side of the felt hat puggarees. Most related to infantry units, but NZASC and NZMMG companies also had their own. A national title was introduced in October 1943 in black on khaki, and that December a red-on-khaki title was introduced for non-divisional troops in the Pacific, including RNZAF personnel.

Some small units had their own titles. These included the multi-national Long Range Desert Group, who wore 'LRDG' slip-on titles in red on black, as well as the Group's cap badge. For a short time the 2nd NZ Tank Bn in the Pacific wore a yellow stripe below the national title.

Wound stripes were issued and sewn above the left cuff of formal uniform, one for each event; these were 1½ in-long vertical bars of narrow gold braid. Service chevrons were issued one for each year of service. These were machine-sewn (or later, painted) in red on khaki, and were sewn above the right cuff point-upwards.

EQUIPMENT

Helmets

Personnel were issued with either the standard British-made Mk II steel helmet with the Mk II liner (or earlier Mk I liner), or the Australian-made, New Zealand-assembled equivalent. Helmets were generally painted a matt green colour, with some later over-painted with camouflage patterns. A variety of khaki covers made from sandbags, string netting, and fine woven covers were all used; in the Pacific the hessian covers were dyed a 'bottle-green' colour.

Dispatch riders wore the pre-war pulp crash helmet, and later in Italy the Mk I crash helmet. Armoured crews were issued with the British-made tank crash helmet and 'scrum cap' to hold the headphones.

This Kiwi in the Western Desert wears 1937 web equipment for a march, with a blanket strapped around the haversack worn as a pack. The large 'basic pouches' of the '37 webbing were designed for versatility. Section tactics were built around the Bren light machine gun, and one pouch could hold two magazines to be passed to the Bren-gunner; 50 rifle rounds in stripper-clips were issued in a five-pocket cotton bandolier that could be folded into the other pouch; alternatively, several types of hand and rifle grenade, or 2in mortar bombs, could be carried. The man at the right has the Mk VI respirator haversack in the 'alert' position, and note the deep, buttoned turn-ups of his 'Bombay bloomers'. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; DA-00759-F)

Web equipment

The first three Echelons were issued with Great War-vintage 1908 pattern webbing. Some officers were issued with the pistol set, comprising a special belt with braces, brace attachments, holster and pistol ammunition pouch. Other ranks were issued with belt, braces, rifle ammunition pouches, haversack, large pack, water bottle and bayonet frog. The 1908 pattern entrenching tool and carriers were not used. Officers not wearing webbing wore the leather Sam Browne belt with one cross strap. Binoculars and compasses had leather

carriers; the water bottle worn with this early combination of officers' equipment was carried in the Mk II harness, and the web 'other services' haversack was worn on the side.

The British-designed 1937 web equipment that eventually replaced the outdated '08 pattern consisted of belt, braces, 'basic' pouches, bayonet frog, haversack, pack, water-bottle carrier, support straps and pack straps. The entrenching tool and carrier were not issued. Officers were issued with a binocular case, compass pouch, holster, pistol ammunition pouch, and an officer's small 'valise' haversack.

The 2nd Echelon were issued with the new webbing in mid-1940 while stationed in England, the 1st and 3rd Echelons in late 1940 in Egypt, and 2nd NZ Div retained it throughout the war. The British-made webbing was a light tan colour and the original issue was made by the Mills Equipment Company. In Italy some units camouflaged the webbing with green blotches.

In 1942 large amounts of Canadian-made '37 pattern webbing arrived in New Zealand; this was of a more yellowish colour than the British set, and some pieces were constructed slightly differently. This equipment was issued to 3rd NZ Div for service in the Pacific, and on Guadalcanal the assembled web sets were camouflaged.

The obsolete New Zealand 1911 web rifle ammunition carriers were still in use in Egypt by non-frontline units, while the 1908 equipment was still being used in Greece and Crete during 1941.

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PLATE COMMENTARIES

A: NEW ZEALAND & UK, 1940

A1: Gunner, NZ Field Artillery; 1st Echelon, New Zealand, January 1940

The Other Ranks' drab Service Dress uniform bears brass flaming bomb badges on the collar and 'NZFA' titles on the shoulder straps. The puggaree of his felt 'lemon-squeezer' hat is in artillery colours (dark blue/ red/ dark blue), and bears the NZ Artillery 'gun' badge, later replaced with the universal 'Onward' badge. The 1908 pattern webbing lacks the entrenching tool and head and helve carriers. On his left hip the haversack hangs over the bayonet scabbard, and on the right a water bottle with a round Mounted Service mess tin attached. The standard rifle of 2 NZEF was the Great War-vintage .303in Short Magazine Lee Enfield Mk III*. The American-made P14 Mk I in .303in calibre was issued in small numbers to non-infantry units and was used in Greece and Crete. The newer No. 4 Mk I* rifle saw limited service from 1943, as did the Mk I*T sniper version. The 1907 pattern (No.1 Mk I) and the P14 (No.3 Mk I) bayonets each had a 17-in blade, the latter with two grooves on the grip to distinguish it from the former.

A2: Lieutenant, 23rd Battalion; 2nd Echelon, UK, July 1940

This former Territorial Force officer is a veteran of the Great War, as shown by the ribbons of his War and Victory Medals, so he is old for his rank. On the cap and lapels of his Service Dress uniform are NZ 'Onward' badges in two sizes, and on his shoulder straps brass rank 'pips'. The sleeve patches follow the complicated scheme used in 1940. The upper red rectangle indicates 5th Bde; the red of the large square indicates the infantry; and the drab triangle shape set on it identifies the unit within the brigade. Within each brigade these drab shapes were the same – e.g., in 5th Bde: star (Bde HQ); square (senior battalion, 21st Bn); rectangle (intermediate battalion, 22nd Bn); triangle (junior battalion, 23rd Bn); diamond (5th AT Coy); and vertical rectangle (5th LAA Battery). This officer carries over his arm a New Zealand-made three-quarter length 'Officer's Warm' coat. As the threat of gas was perceived to be very real in the early war period, the 2nd NZ Div was issued with Mk IV (stockingette-covered) and Mk V (rubber) gas masks, with the canister initially in sand-colour and later in brick-red, carried in the standard British haversack. This lieutenant was issued one, and a Mk II helmet, upon his arrival in England.

A3: Sergeant, NZ Engineers; 3rd Echelon, New Zealand, August 1940

Waiting to board his troopship, this sapper is dressed in the newly issued Battledress suit. His felt hat displays a khaki/ dark blue/ khaki puggaree and brass 'Onward' badge. On the sleeves the dark blue disc identifies 8th Field Company NZE, while the drab triangle superimposed on the 'basic patch' identifies 6th Brigade. Brass 'NZ ENGINEERS' shoulder-strap titles were issued until stocks were exhausted. He wears 1908 web equipment in marching order; hidden here, hanging below the large pack, is a D-shaped mess tin in a cotton cover. The rest of his 'wanted on voyage' gear is stowed in a cotton 'sea kit bag' that has been stencilled with his number, name and unit.

Captain Denver Fountaine, C Coy, 20th Bn, who was wounded in the right leg and captured at Belhamed in November 1941; this photo was taken after his release seven weeks later, when British forces recaptured Bardia (see also under Plate G1). Such combinations of BD and KD garments were common in the desert. (Denver Fountaine Collection)

B: GREECE & CRETE, 1941

B1: Lieutenant, Divisional Cavalry; Greece, April 1941

The unpopular Indian-made pith helmet that replaced the felt hat before the Greek campaign bears the green disc of the Divisional Cavalry on both sides. Worsted rank 'pips' are sewn on his shoulder straps and 'NEW ZEALAND' titles on his upper sleeves; the second, simplified sleeve-patch system specified only a single 'formation' patch, here the green disc of his regiment. He has the officer's 1937 equipment set, plus a leather binocular case and NZ-made map case with a leather strap. Officers were issued either a Smith & Wesson .455in revolver converted to .45in, or an Enfield No.2 Mk I .38in revolver. In Italy and the Pacific some American M1911A1 .45 ACP semi-automatic pistols were also used.

B2: Private, 27th (Machine Gun) Battalion; Crete, May 1941

The divisional MG battalion was equipped with the belt-fed, water-cooled .303in Mk I Vickers medium machine gun. This gunner defending Maleme against German paratroopers had to leave his Vickers behind when he was evacuated from Greece, and has acquired a .303in Bren light machine gun – the standard infantry section LMG throughout 2 NZEF. In a campaign of enforced retreats he has lost his BD blouse, and now fights in a tan collarless work shirt. Rebuilt in Egypt, the unit received replacement Vickers guns, and when 2nd NZ Div reached Italy in 1943 they were also issued with some US .30cal M1919A1 Brownings. (The obsolete .303in Lewis gun was also used by 2NZEF in the desert and the Pacific, though primarily in the anti-aircraft role.)

B3: Major-General Bernard Freyberg, VC, DSO; Crete, May 1941**

The GOC Creforce wears an SD cap with a staff red band and general officer's bullion badge. On his shoulder straps are rank badges of a star over a crossed sword and baton, and on his collar staff gorget patches. His ribbons are those of the Victoria Cross, Order of the Bath, Order of St Michael & St George, DSO with two rosettes indicating Bars, 1914 Star with rosette, British War Medal, Victory Medal with Mentioned in Dispatches oakleaf, 1935 Jubilee and 1937 Coronation medals, and the French *Croix de Guerre avec Palme*. Behind him is the fernleaf and '40' tactical sign of 2nd NZ Div HQ, as seen in North Africa.

C: NORTH AFRICA, 1941–42

C1: Lieutenant Charles Upham, VC, 20th Battalion; November 1941

Charles Upham remains New Zealand's most famous soldier, and is renowned internationally as being one of only three men in history – and the only combat soldier – to have been awarded the Victoria Cross twice (Capts Martin-Leake and Chavasse, awarded Bars in the Great War, were both medical officers). Leading his platoon as a lieutenant in C Coy, 20th Bn during the battle of Crete, Upham personally destroyed a number of German machine-gun posts that had pinned down his men during the failed counter-attack on Maleme airfield, and he continued to display outstanding courage in actions during the retreat to Sfakia. Promoted tocaptain, he was awarded his second VC for actions in North Africa during the break-out at Minqar Qaim and at Ruweisat Ridge, where he was captured. As a POW, Upham made numerous escape attempts, resulting in his being transferred to Colditz Castle. Never a man to feel comfortable in the limelight, Upham credited his decorations to the fighting abilities of his men. He had a casual approach to rank, preferring his men to call him 'Boss', and discouraging saluting. He is shown as he was photographed when receiving his first VC. Upham wears an FS cap with the 'Onward' badge, KD shirt with shoulder-strap rank slides, shorts, and his now notorious non-regulation 'yellowish' socks (a patriotic gift from home). His webbing has been assembled to suit his needs, with the addition of an RTR holster.

C2: Gunner, 7th Anti-Tank Regiment; Operation *Crusader*, November 1941

Against the cold of the desert night while manning an exposed 2-pdr AT gun of one of the brigade companies he wears a World War I-pattern greatcoat, along with a scarf, balaclava and fingerless gloves. The helmet is covered with a string net that comes to a small open circle at the apex. The shoulder flashes in artillery colours are those of his parent unit, 7th Anti-Tank Regiment. As a non-infantryman he has webbing with 'cartridge carriers' rather than 'basic pouches'. (Incidentally, the British .55in Boys Mk I AT rifle was initially used by the infantry throughout both NZ divisions, but its service was limited after it proved ineffective against German armour.)

C3: Trooper, Long Range Desert Group; Libya, 1942

New Zealanders were considered ideal for this elite reconnaissance unit due to their practical skills and initiative – men from isolated farming communities were likely to be experienced light-truck drivers and self-taught mechanics already. This volunteer from the Divisional Cavalry serving with either R or T Patrol wears his parent unit's khaki/ green/ khaki hat puggaree, but the LRDG's scorpion cap badge. Over his Indian-made cellular shirt is a tatty sleeveless pullover, exposing 'LRDG' titles at the ends of his shirt shoulder straps. At his waist an open-top holster hangs from a looped leather belt with spare rounds for his .38 Smith & Wesson revolver. Note his Egyptian-made sandals.

D: NORTH AFRICA, 1942–43

D1: Staff Nurse, NZ Army Nursing Service, Service Dress; Egypt, 1942

This new arrival to Egypt wears as Service Dress a red-trimmed grey 'outdoor' uniform, as worn with minor variations by several British and Commonwealth nursing services. On the shoulder straps are captain's equivalent rank pips in dull white metal, above, sewn to her sleeve, white-on-black 'NZANS' titles. Her hat is a grey felt with a flat crown and a simple ribbon. An NZANS badge is pinned to her necktie.

D2: Driver, NZ Army Service Corps; El Alamein, October 1942

The 2nd NZ Div was generously motorized, which gave it superior mobility in the desert. This driver is dressed in Indian-made summer clothing. The shoulder straps of the light grey shirt, with slip-on national titles, pass through slits in the machine-knitted jersey. His 'Bombay bloomers' have

The first New Zealand women sent overseas were nurses from the NZANS. In 1941, 30 'Tuis' from the Women's War Service Auxiliary followed, to work in the NZ Force Club in Cairo; and subsequently, Voluntary Aids from the Red Cross served in overseas hospitals. These sisters from the 3rd NZ General Hospital wear white 'indoor' uniform, with the NZANS badge pinned to the right breast, and rank 'pips' on red shoulder-strap slides. For the grey 'outdoor' uniform, see Plate D1. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; DA-02630-F)

extra long legs that could be tied and tucked in at the calf to protect against mosquitoes, or buttoned up like this. His helmet is covered with sand-bag hessian. Like C2, his webbing incorporates 'cartridge carriers'. Taking a break to answer a call of nature, he carries a shovel and a copy of the 2nd NZ Div newspaper, *The N.Z.E.F. Times*.

D3: 2nd Lieutenant Te Moananui-a-kiwa Ngarimu, VC, 28th (Maori) Battalion; Tebaga Gap, Tunisia, March 1943

Moana Ngarimu was the second New Zealand officer to be awarded the Victoria Cross during World War II, but in his case posthumously. He was leading 14 Platoon, C Coy, 28th Bn when they captured a strategic strongpoint near Point 209 during the battle of Tebaga Gap in the Mareth Line. He destroyed two machine-gun posts by himself while seizing the position, and provided spirited leadership during repeated German counter-attacks. Ngarimu sustained a shoulder wound, and, with mounting casualties and limited ammunition, the dwindling platoon were eventually forced out of the position; but 'in a majestic fighting mood', Lt Ngarimu led a counter-attack of his own that recaptured the crest. Despite being wounded again, in the leg, he refused to be evacuated. Standing firing his Thompson gun from the hip and throwing hand-grenades, Ngarimu was killed during the final failed attempt by the enemy to dislodge the New Zealanders. To honour Ngarimu's bravery the hill was named 'Hikurangi', after his tribal mountain in New Zealand. Here he wears a KD shirt with rank/ title slides, Battledress trousers supported by civilian braces (suspenders), and the 1937 webbing officer's set worn as per regulations. The compass pouch and binocular case are at his right front, the pistol ammunition pouch and holster at his left, and the officer's small 'valise' haversack at his left hip – presumably holding Thompson magazines as well as maps, etc.

E: ITALY, 1943–44

E1: Warrant officer, 26th Battalion; Sangro river crossing, November 1943

Wearing a leather jerkin over his Battledress, this WO Class 2 displays 6th Bde patches sewn to his upper sleeves, and white-on-khaki woven rank badges on his forearms. The British camouflage-coloured anti-gas cape was isued in Italy; rolled and tied to his haversack, it was used simply as a raincoat. Note also the entrenching spade. The US M1928 and M1928A1 Thompson sub-machine guns were issued throughout both NZ divisions; limited numbers were available for the early campaigns, with this M1928A1 being used extensively in Italy. (The New Zealand attitude to soldiering is perhaps underlined by a photograph that shows even the entertainers of the Kiwi Concert Party in North Africa being thoroughly trained in its use.)

E2: Trooper, 19th Armoured Regiment; Orsogna, December 1943

Wearing the black beret of the British Royal Armoured Corps with the 'Onward' badge set on a red backing, this Sherman crewman also illustrates the NZ-made battledress blouse with a buttoning collar tab. On his shoulder straps are the usual national titles, but he does not wear the square red patch identifying 4th Brigade. Above his left pocket is the ribbon for the Africa Star medal with '8' for Eighth Army. The basket-weave scarf is not an issue item, and was presumably sent to him by his mother. He is armed with an Enfield No.2 Mk I* revolver, and has converted his long-strap Royal Tank Regiment holster to sit higher at the waist. His heating of tinned 'M&V' stew over a 'Benghazi cooker' has attracted the unit mascot, 'Major Major'. This white Australian Bull Terrier had been with the unit since it left New Zealand in 1940, but he would die from sickness in Italy in December 1944.

These officers enjoying the Italian sun all wear US-made olive drab flannel shirts converted by the addition of shoulder straps, with KD shorts. At left is a drab GS cap, as introduced for junior officers and other ranks in July 1944, with a black diamond flash behind the 'Onward' badge. At centre, the black armoured troops' beret will have either red backing for 4th NZ Armd Bde or green for the Divisional Cavalry. The right-hand man wearing the SD cap has a pre-war pattern of US shirt with a placket front. (Barry O'Sullivan Collection)

E3: Sergeant, 28th (Maori) Battalion; Gothic Line, July 1944

Casually dressed for warm weather, this NCO is wearing an American-made OD flannel shirt and New Zealand BD trousers, with one of the knitted caps sent out by the NZ National Patriotic Fund Board. In the front lines in the latter part of the war rank chevrons were displayed on the right sleeve only, or not at all. His webbing is minimal 'musketry order', with an American T-handled M1910 entrenching tool fixed behind, and a slung khaki cotton bandolier with an extra 50 rifle rounds.

F: THE PACIFIC, 1943–44

F1: Private, 37th Battalion, 14th Brigade; Vella Lavella, September 1943

This infantryman of 3rd NZ Div fighting in the Solomons has been issued a short-billed US Army fatigue cap, a first-pattern fatigue jacket and trousers with cargo pockets, all in OD herringbone twill material, and Canadian-made webbing. Only his 'Onward' badge, boots, and SMLE Mk III* rifle are New Zealand items. The 3rd NZ Div units carried gas masks in their first combat operations, but these were soon discarded.

F2: Medical orderly, 7th Field Ambulance, 8th Brigade; Mono Island, October 1943

The bush shirt and trousers are NZ-made khaki drill clothing spray-painted by hand with a camouflage pattern to make

them suitable for jungle fighting. A flexible lacquer was used, in dark brown and dark green with dots of light green. Note that his web equipment has also been camouflaged, but the jungle hat is plain green. The Japanese never respected the status of medical personnel, and this medic wears no identifying armband – indeed, he has strapped to his belt a large NZ-made brass-hilted knuckleduster knife in a leather scabbard. Hanging from the handle of the folded litter (stretcher) is a helmet with a 'bottle-green' cover. Medics of 14th Bde serving on Nissan Island a few months later were fully armed and carried grenades, to protect themselves and their patients in case of attack.

F3: Clerk, Women's Army Auxiliary Corps; New Caledonia, 1944

This NZWAAC is stationed at the 3rd NZ Div Headquarters on New Caledonia to perform administrative duties. She is dressed in a khaki drill smock-dress buttoned all the way down the front. Her only insignia are slip-on national shoulder titles in the 3rd Division's black-on-khaki style.

G: ITALY, 1945

G1: Colonel Denver Fountaine, DSO, MC, ED*, MiD; 2 NZEF Forward Base, Bari, January 1945

The colonel wears the khaki beret issued to field-rank officers instead of the unsightly GS cap, with a black diamond backing to the 'Onward' badge. His blouse bears only his rank, medal ribbons and national title.

At the declaration of war in 1939 Fountaine was a 25-year-old infantry lieutenant in the Territorial Force who volunteered to serve overseas. Initially a platoon commander in C Coy, 20th Bn, he was promoted to captain, and led the company in Greece and on Crete, where he recommended Charles Upham for his first VC. Fountaine was wounded and captured when his battalion was overrun at Belhamed in November 1941, but was later rescued, and was awarded the Military Cross for his actions during the campaign. Again, it was he who initially nominated Upham for his second VC in 1942. Identified as a reliable and capable commander, at the age of 28 Fountaine was promoted to lieutenant-colonel; he led 26th Bn at El Alamein and throughout the rest of the North African campaign, being awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his leadership at Tebaga Gap. He was appointed temporary acting brigadier of 6th Bde in mid-1944, and in January 1945 he was promoted to colonel, commanding the 2 NZEF Forward Base at Bari until the end of the war. He is remembered as an officer who cared for the welfare of his men, especially those from his home town of Westport. (ED* = Efficiency Decoration and Bar. The ED was awarded from 1931 to Territorial Force officers after 20 years' satisfactory service, and a Bar after a further 6 years, but the qualification period was halved in wartime.)

G2: Corporal, NZ Signal Corps; Trieste, May 1945

Employed as a motorcycle dispatch rider, he wears an old-style pulp crash helmet, goggles and leather gauntlets. The sleeve patches of 2nd NZ Div Signals, and his 'official duty' armlets, are in the white-over-light blue of the NZSC. Note three red service chevrons showing above his right gauntlet. He has also acquired a pair of British DR boots to wear on his trips between Trieste and Monfalcone on the northern Adriatic coast. Affectionately known as 'Freyberg's forty thousand thieves', New Zealand soldiers were renowned for 'liberating' anything they needed. (A comparable expertise earned 3rd NZ Div in the Pacific the name of the 'Great Kiwi Looting Bird'.)

G3: Private, 2nd NZ Division; local leave, Venice, July 1945

Thousands of New Zealand soldiers took the opportunity to travel throughout Italy and Britain in the months following the end of the war while they waited for ships to carry them home. (The Kiwis were noted for their good relations with Italian civilians, and many Italian war brides emigrated to New Zealand after the war.) His outfit shows the mixed origins typical of the Mediterranean theatre in 1943–45. The headgear is the British-made GS cap, introduced to replace the FS cap in most units of 2 NZEF in July 1944; the 'Onward' badge on a black diamond is his only insignia apart from shoulder titles. He is dressed in an American-made HBT bush shirt and Indian-made KD trousers in pale khaki, worn without web equipment – not even a belt.

H: INSIGNIA

H1a, 1b, 1c: 25th Battery, 4th Regiment, NZ Field Artillery, pre-September 1940: The pre-war brass shoulder-strap title is shown above a 'formation' patch in arm-of-service colours (red over very dark blue) in the square shape of 4th Brigade. The colours are repeated in the lower 'universal' patch, with an added drab square identifying 25th Bty by its shape.

H2: Universal brass 'four-star' New Zealand Forces button – also available in blackened brass for chaplains, bronze or bakelite for officers' KD, and leather for 'Officer's Warm' coats.

H3: Patch of 35th Inf Bn, 14th Bde, 3rd NZ Div, 2 NZEF (IP), worn on the sides of the felt hat.

H4a, H4b: Example of simplified second patch system, post-September 1940. The hand-embroidered national title, worn as a slip-on over the shoulder straps, is shown above the rectangular patch in artillery colours worn by 5th Field Artillery Regt, 2nd NZ Division.

H5–H7: Infantry brigade patches of 2nd NZ Div, 1941 onwards: **H5** = 4th Bde, **H6** = 5th Bde, **H7** = 6th Brigade.

H8: Hat, cap and collar badge, 2 NZEF (also available in bronze for officers).

H9: Hat and cap badge, Long Range Desert Group.

H10: Hat and cap badge, NZ Women's Army Auxiliary Corps.

H11: Badge, NZ Army Nursing Service.

H12: Brass WO Class 2 rank badge, worn on khaki cloth or leather wristlet when in rolled-sleeve shirt.

H13: Chaplain's purple stripe sewn above 2nd Div national title.

H14: Long Range Desert Group title sewn above 2nd Div national title.

H15: Black-on-KD national title introduced for 3rd Div in Pacific in 1943.

H16: Late-war printed title, 2nd Division.

H17: Captain's rank slide with title, 2nd Division.

H18: Tank qualification patch, authorized for wear in early 1942.

H19: Divisional Cavalry Battalion patch, worn when converted to infantry in 9th Bde, 2nd Div, January 1945.

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